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The Nation.

December 12, 1981 $1.25

EDITORIAL

OFFENSIVE 'PEACE'

Moscow sent a clever 45-year-old Germanologist to the Great Peace Talks (Intermediate Missile Division) in Geneva. Washington dispatched an old cold warrior who did his triumphant best to kill SALT II. Thus the Russians may have already won the 1982 Battle of Europe.

Not that the struggle for the "hearts and minds" of our increasingly nervous allies will be over soon. Paul Nitze and Yuli Kvitsinsky will be doing their saraband for months to come. It would be just a brief whirl if the two superpowers really wanted to start cutting back their superweaponry in Europe. They need only agree to reduce the middle-range missiles—pulling them back, pulling them out and just failing to deploy the latest nuclear toys.

But that is not the name of this game for the United States or the U.S.S.R. Both want to emerge from Geneva with the blame for the extra click of the ratchet of destruction fixed on the other side. On the day after the Geneva talks began, Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle declared that the United States had prepared no compromise position; he equated compromise with the appeasement of Nazi Germany. And should the Russians heed the President's November 18 offer to negotiate—or his years of calling them liars and cheats?

As for the Soviet side, they hold the high cards in the game of propaganda. Their SS-20s are in place. They can play the dismantlement ace against all the NATO nuclear powers, and it will be their pleasure to keep reminding the Europeans of Dr. Reagan's diagnosis of the Continent's malady as "pacifism and neutrality." But then if things go wrong and Nitze plays his stacked deck clumsily, Reagan could always send over his suspended national security adviser, Richard Allen, with a new hand—outstretched.

THE 20-CENT STAMP CAPER
Ralph Nader

AWACS AND ANTI-SEMITISM
Cara Gendel Ryan

THE FEMINIST PAPERS III
Frances Lear
Mim Kelber

IS GOD A FEMINIST?
Carol Flake

'WHAT MANNER OF BEAST'
Mary Kinzie

WELFARE AND OTHER MESSES

REDEEMING GOVERNMENT

PHILIP GREEN

The disaffection of white Americans from the idea that government can improve the quality of their lives and extend the realm of social justice is probably unparalleled in the Western world today. This condition poses a fundamental obstacle to all programs for reform, since there is no institutional tool for change that can equal the agencies of government in scope and impact.

Several of the causes of this condition are deeply embedded in American history. Its contemporary apotheosis, however, is related to aspects of our collective life that, in principle at least, are within our control. Put most simply, government in America is uniquely unpopular because it is uniquely inefficient. By "inefficient" I mean that Americans get less in return for their tax dollars than the citizens of any other similarly wealthy country. But it is crucial for us to recognize that much contemporary dissatisfaction springs not from excesses of liberalism but from excesses of illiberalism and from the extraordinary inequality and militarization of our society. Let us look at them in turn.

The most wasteful government expenditures in the United States are for welfare, that is, the total of all payments made gratis (rather than as a return on insurance premiums) to people without any income or with an income sufficient only for a bare subsistence. I do not mean by the characterization "wasteful" that welfare expenditures are not an expression of human decency, because of course they are, or that they do not put food on the tables of the needy, because of course they do. The wastefulness of welfare is that, humanitarian considerations aside, its social impact is negligible; it is as if we had simply thrown the money into the sea.

(Continued on Page 639)

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LETTERS.

TRILLING'S COMPLAINT

Cornwall Bridge, Conn.

My shame's revealed and *The Nation*'s to blame. That it's I who am the most vulgar legislator of mankind now legislating in America would have been known only to Diana Trilling and me, had it not been for Elizabeth Pochoda blowing my cover in her review of Mrs. Trilling's book on Jean Harris ["When I Hear the Word Gun I Reach for My Culture," Nov. 21].

Predictably, Mrs. Trilling was herself morally beyond reproach and tasteful in the extreme when she pointed to "a leading American novelist" and not directly to me as her touchstone for vulgarity à la Dr. Tarnower. What's more, to keep "the community of advanced intellectuals" from discovering my identity and withdrawing from me my "prestige," she cleverly allowed that she had deduced my vulgarity from two remarks attributed to me by a *New York Times* reporter during an interview "in his new house in the country, bought from his sizable literary earnings." As I'm clearly not the only "leading American writer" who lives in a house bought from literary earnings rather than from inherited wealth or business income, and since the eighteenth-century farmhouse that I've inhabited for a decade now isn't new in any sense of the word, I quickly understood that what might appear on the surface to be an oddly twisted perspective was simply Mrs. Trilling's renowned propriety shading the facts so as to shield me from exposure. Feigning uncharacteristic humorlessness, the paraphrasing Mrs. Trilling so generously disguised the tone, context and intent of my quoted remarks that I was sure my vulgarity would remain a secret not only from the advanced community of intellectuals but from the tens of thousands who followed the serialization of her book in the sober, tasteful pages of the *New York Post*.

Beware, Pochoda. I've still got many dirty millions left from legislating my Tarnovian taste to mankind, and Mrs. Trilling has just got a clean cool million in return for the rights to make a sober, tasteful, big-budget movie of her book—and if she and I ever pool our resources, you and *The Nation* won't know what hit you. I assure you that despite her cultivation and refinement, Mrs. Trilling isn't somebody whose pugnacity you'd want to confront, certainly not were she allied with a leading American lowlife like me. *Philip Roth*

RESEGREGATING EDUCATION

Los Angeles

On November 19, the U.S. Assistant Attorney General for civil rights told a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, "We are not going to compel children who don't choose to have an integrated education to have one."

Shades of the "massive resistance," during the 1950s and 1960s, of the Southern states to *Brown* v. *Board of Education*! Shades of Governor George Wallace standing in the schoolhouse door defying the then Assistant Attorney General for civil rights! Shades of Governor Ross Barnett preventing the registration of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi!

But more. The U.S. government now holds positions that Dwight Eisenhower held before (not to say after, as well) *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. In his memoirs, Chief Justice Earl Warren noted that he "always believed that President Eisenhower resented our decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* and its progeny." Warren told that while the case was before the Court, he was invited to a dinner at the White House at which one of the guests was John W. Davis, "the counsel for the segregation states. During the dinner [at which the Chief Justice sat next to the President] the President went to considerable lengths to tell me what a great man Mr. Davis was." As they left the dining room, the President "took me by the arm, and, as we walked along, speaking of the Southern states in the segregation cases, he said, 'These are not bad people. All they are concerned about is to see that their sweet little girls are not required to sit in school alongside some big overgrown Negroes.'"

Our national government has now come full circle. What a commentary on its devotion to the Constitution! *George Slaff*

IMPRISONED IRANIAN POET

New York City

As writers who actively opposed U.S. support for the Shah of Iran, we are concerned about the October 12 arrest of poet Reza Baraheni in Teheran. While in exile in the United States, following his imprisonment by the Shah's regime, Reza Baraheni—through his writing and courageous work—educated the American people about the tyranny of the Shah and about U.S. complicity with that tyranny.

Dore Ashton
Kay Boyle
Ronald Christ
E. L. Doctorow
Frances FitzGerald
Allen Ginsberg
Nat Hentoff
Grace Paley

FURTHER WORD FROM THE A.C.L.U.

Washington, D.C.

Your November 7 editorial ["Hanging Together"] about American Civil Liberties Union lobbying on the names-of-agents legislation now pending in Congress was confusing and incomplete.

It was confusing because it failed to state that the A.C.L.U. has consistently, loudly and publicly opposed all versions of this or any other legislation that would make it a crime to publish information in the public domain. We believe and have always stated that this bill is a massive assault on the First Amendment. Despite our opposition since the bill was first introduced five years ago, it has now passed in the House and is likely soon to pass in the Senate. In lobbying against it, we have expressed our opposition not only to the bill itself but also to amendments, offered in the House by John Ashbrook and in the Senate by Jeremiah Denton, to make the legislation even broader and more threatening to First Amendment rights.

These broadening amendments are what sparked the controversy recounted in *The Nation* editorial. In some quarters it was thought that our active efforts to prevent the Ashbrook and Denton amendments from being adopted implied that we "supported" a narrower version of the bill. This is nonsense, since we not only have opposed all versions but have repeatedly warned that the A.C.L.U. will challenge in court as unconstitutional *any* version that punishes publication of information in the public domain. On the other hand, we believe it would seriously compromise civil liberties principles not to work to defeat amendments that would make the bill even worse than it is now.

The Nation editorial was also incomplete because it aired a controversy concerning a lobbying meeting at which the A.C.L.U. argued its position on the bill and the broadening amendments with the Central Intelligence Agency without alluding to similar lobbying meetings that other civil liberties organizations regularly have with executive branch officials. For example, a number of groups have met on different occasions with Attorney General William French Smith and his deputy, Jonathan Rose, to state their opposition to amendments to the Freedom of Information Act, which would broaden the exceptions to the F.O.I.A. and make it harder to secure the release of information. This is precisely what the A.C.L.U. was doing when it met with C.I.A. officials on the intelligence identities bill, and it is what any civil liberties advocate who seeks to influence the legislative process must do in order to mount an effective and principled defense of civil liberties in Congress. To argue otherwise is to engage in self-defeating debate that has little to do with tactics or principle.

John Shattuck
National Legislative Director, A.C.L.U.

REPLY

Our editorial clearly stated that the American Civil Liberties Union "has opposed any names-of-agents bill as inherently unconstitutional" and that, when passage nevertheless became probable, it worked to narrow the language "without abandoning its constitutional objections."

—The Editors

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The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Publisher, Hamilton Fish III

Advertising Manager, Carole Kraemer; *Business Manager,* Ann B. Epstein; *Bookkeeper,* Gertrude Silverston; *Art/Production Manager,* Jane Sharples; *Assistant to Publisher,* Laurie Lipper; *Circulation Manager,* Stephen King; *Classified,* Deborah Kriger; *Receptionist,* Greta Loell; *Mail Clerk,* John Holtz; *Administrative Secretary,* Shirley Sulat; *Nation Associates,* Claudine Bacher; *Nation News Service,* Jeff Sorensen; *Publishing Consultant,* Jack Berkowitz; *Circulation Consultant,* Deborah Begel.

The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the first week in January, and biweekly in July and August) by Nation Enterprises and © 1981 in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. Tel.: 212-242-8400. *Subscription Mail Address:* Nation Subscription Service, P.O. Box 1953, Marion, Ohio 43305. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. International Telex: 667 155 NATION.

Regular Subscription Price: One year, $30; two years, $50; six months, $15. Add $5 per year postage for Canada and Mexico; $7 other foreign. All foreign subscriptions must be paid in equivalent U.S. funds. **Please allow 5-7 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries should be sent to: *The Nation,* Subscription Services, P.O. Box 1953, Marion, Ohio 43305.

EDITORIALS.

Allen's Alibis

Announcing, "It's time that this case be aired in a responsible forum," national security adviser Richard Allen took his defense to *Meet the Press* and a national brunchtime audience. At last, we thought, Allen would lay to rest the "innuendoes and sly accusations" circulated by the American and Japanese press these past weeks regarding his acceptance of a mystery envelope containing $1,000 from Japanese journalists in return for arranging an interview with Nancy Reagan. Allen pleaded innocent to the charge of having accepted an agent's commission for the interview; he also denied any conflicts of interest in the installment-plan sale of Potomac International Corporation, a Washington, D.C., firm he owned, to former Reagan speechwriter Peter Hannaford. The case was remanded to *Face the Nation* for further hearings, with Allen reserving the right of appeal on *Today* and *The Tonight Show.*

As for the approximately $50,000 that Hannaford owed Allen on the deal, Allen told the *Meet the Press* magistrates that only "this morning" Hannaford had paid up in full. This revelation was only one in a series of "corrections" Allen has been issuing since the affair became public. Asked why he continued to see Japanese clients of his former firm, Allen explained that he was just chatting with old friends. We expect a further correction by Allen any day explaining that he sold his friends to Hannaford, along with the office furniture.

It is, of course, not the first time that Allen's business interests have put him in such a compromising position; indeed, it has been suggested that this is merely his annual conflict-of-interest scandal. Reagan stood by him before the election, but now, with all the innuendoes going around, the White House has left him twisting in the wind. The Ad-

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ministration's true thinking on employee ethics was imparted by Richard Hauser, deputy to Presidential counsel Fred Fielding. Explaining why the White House found no conflict of interest in Allen's dealings with Hannaford, Hauser compared the sale of Potomac International to owning stock in Exxon—"you hope they do well so the value doesn't go down." But of course. And Director of Central Intelligence William Casey need not put his stocks in a blind trust and White House deputy chief of staff Michael Deaver may also sell his partnership in a company to Hannaford on the easy-payment plan. In an Administration dedicated to serving any big corporation with its hand out, it is not surprising that the dealings of a small businessman like Richard Allen do not amount to a hill of beans. We suspect that Allen will be allowed to resign quietly in the proper season as a peace gesture from the White House to Al Haig. But if he does get the sack, please don't tell us it was because of his business ethics.

Refugee Gulags

Since the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, there have been few episodes in American history as disgraceful as the treatment of the Cuban and Haitian "boat people." Although no charges have been brought against them, more than 4,000 of these refugees are currently in American prisons. Most of the Cubans have been incarcerated in the old Federal prison in Atlanta since they came to this country as part of the "freedom flotilla" a year and a half ago. The Haitians have been confined in Florida and Puerto Rico in what must be labeled concentration camps; most of them have been there for several months. And the Reagan Administration is implementing plans that will increase their suffering. Many of the Haitians, accustomed to life in the tropics, will be transferred to Fort Drum, near the Canadian border of New York State, where winter temperatures near zero are common and the barracks are uninsulated.

It is not just the conditions under which the boat people are confined that makes their treatment disgraceful, however. It is also the campaign the Administration is waging to deny them an opportunity to present their claims for asylum to the courts. That campaign was highlighted recently by the deployment of a Coast Guard cutter to intercept and board boats carrying refugees from Haiti outside U.S. territorial waters, where lawyers and courts would not be able to help them [see editorial, "Haitian Blockade," *The Nation*, October 17]. As far as is known, only one boat, carrying fifty-seven Haitians, was stopped during the first two months of the program. U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service officers from the Coast Guard cutter boarded the refugee vessel and, unhampered by lawyers representing the Haitians, determined that none of them met the legal conditions for political asylum. They were not refugees fleeing persecution, according to the officers, nor did they have a well-founded fear of being persecuted if they were forcibly repatriated. How such determinations were made is not known because no reporters were present. The Coast Guard turned down *The Nation*'s request to assign a reporter to the cutter, though it found room for Haitian naval officers. (Incidentally, the Coast Guard announced that it spent about $2 million to catch those fifty-seven Haitians and that the cost of the interception effort will necessitate cutbacks in other areas, such as apprehending drug smugglers.)

The campaign to deny due process of law to the boat people is also marked by abusive practices in immigration hearings in the United States. Lawyers with the Haitian Refugee Center in Miami, for example, complain that hearings involving their clients are scheduled before different immigration service judges simultaneously. The lawyers' requests for five- and ten-minute continuances so that they can scurry to another client's hearing in another hearing room are routinely denied. More serious than such petty harassment, however, is the Reagan Administration's effort to block the Federal courts from considering claims for asylum by making thinly veiled threats that judicial decisions will be ignored.

Just such a threat is contained in a brief recently submitted by the Justice Department to a United States Court of Appeals. The department seeks to overturn a temporary restraining order issued by Federal District Judge Marvin Shoob that prohibits the deportation of some 1,800 Cubans until they are granted a hearing on their claim that their fear of persecution is well founded. The district court, the Justice Department charges, "is bringing about a needless confrontation between the Executive and Judicial Branches of our Government by soon engaging in [such] a hearing."

Only the refusal of the executive branch to carry out the orders of the court could make these cases a "confrontation." The courts must take such a refusal very seriously because they depend on the executive branch to enforce their orders. Such threats are rarely made by the Justice Department; that they should be made in these cases only underscores the lawlessness of the Reagan Administration's approach to dealing with the Cuban and Haitian boat people.

The department's brief also accuses Judge Shoob of "intruding on the field of foreign affairs and the ability of the President to take what steps he feels are appropriate in this situation." The same argument was made by the Justice Department four decades ago in defense of President Franklin Roosevelt's order for the internment of Japanese-Americans. Now, as then, it is an argument that has no place when individual liberties are at stake.

Devising a fair and humane policy for dealing with those who arrive on our shores is not an easy matter. There are legitimate grounds for excluding many such persons, but there are no legitimate grounds for treating them barbarously or for denying them the rights to which they are entitled under the laws of the United States and under international laws by which the United States has agreed to be bound. An open letter from Haitians confined at Fort Allen, Puerto Rico, that was published recently in *The New York Times* concluded with the right question: "Why among all nations that emigrate to the United States have only the Haitians known such suffering?" Unfortunately, the answer is clear.

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It is because the Haitians, along with many of the Cubans, are black. ARYEH NEIER

Aryeh Neier, a member of The Nation*'s Editorial Board, is vice chairman of the Helsinki Watch and Americas Watch Committees.*

Honduran Choice

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

On November 29, more than 80 percent of the electorate in Honduras went to the polls to give the Liberal Party and its presidential candidate, Dr. Roberto Suazo Córdova, a sizable victory. It was only the second general presidential election held in this country since 1932. Coups and fraud, the mainstays of Honduran politics for the last half-century, were averted in the weeks before the election by elaborate safeguards. Voter registration procedures were strictly monitored, and the military was kept on its best behavior. To make sure that no one cast more than one ballot, voters were required to dip their little fingers in indelible red ink. Before the election, Liberal Party radio stations charged that the rival National Party planned to give its supporters acetone, a solvent that can dissolve ink, to enable them to vote several times. Nonetheless, the election was one of the cleanest in Honduran history.

The victorious right-of-center Liberal Party promises moderate social and land reforms that are much needed by Honduras's 3.7 million people. The country is the second poorest in Latin America (only Haiti is poorer). But the Honduran elections also have an international dimension. As one Honduran put it, "With the rest of Central America in flames around us, how can Honduras fail to catch fire?" On one hand, Hondurans fear that the cycle of subversion and repression that plagues neighboring Guatemala and El Salvador will spread to Honduras. On the other hand, they find their country drawn against its will into a regional military alliance with these two states against Communist "subversion." In the final weeks of the campaign, there was a spate of Red-baiting, including the absurd accusation that the Liberal Party was receiving support from Cuba and Nicaragua. As a result of such charges, Suazo Córdova abandoned his tone of moderation and neutrality and made ringing attacks on "international Communism" and the "Nicaraguan threat." And two weeks before the election, the conservative National Party sponsored a broadcast on national television of *Attack on the Americas*, a film made in the United States by the right-wing American Security Council. The crudely dubbed film was billed as the National Party's own statement.

It was fitting that the main issues in the campaign were domestic political corruption and international Communism. Both relate directly to the military, which most agree remains the real power in the country. The outgoing regime of Gen. Policarpo Paz García was so corrupt that even conservative business groups pressed for a change of government, especially after Paz's disastrous mismanagement of the banking system brought Honduras to the verge of economic collapse. Despite its troubled economy, the country is in the process of beefing up its armed forces in anticipation of a regional conflict. Total military loans and weapons sales by the United States have risen from $5.2 million in 1980 to a projected $10 million in 1982. U.S. military advisers are stationed in the country, although it is difficult to ascertain how many. Many of them put in short tours, in effect passing through Honduras in transit to and from Panama, where they are based. The most reliable recent count puts the number of advisers in Honduras at more than twenty-five.

The election of a constitutional government has been regarded as a necessary step toward restoring legitimacy to the discredited military. This view was first taken by the Carter Administration, and it has been firmly maintained by the Reagan Administration. The military did meddle in the presidential election several times, most recently in October, when a bipartisan civilian commission investigating a land-sale scandal uncovered evidence implicating high-ranking members of Paz's government. Following negotiations with the military, both major parties agreed to soft-pedal the investigation and give the generals a veto over Cabinet ministers appointed by the future administration. In return, the civilian parties were assured, coups would be avoided, or at least postponed. But the incident demonstrated that the military was still in the saddle. "If one group has the votes and the other group has the guns," commented one Honduran intellectual, "who do you think calls the shots? It is indicative that we elect the president of the republic for a four-year term, but the head of the military Superior Council automatically gets five." ANNE NELSON

Anne Nelson writes frequently for The Nation *on Latin American affairs.*

AWARD HONORS CAREY MCWILLIAMS

The American Political Science Association recently announced the establishment of the Carey McWilliams Award, which will be presented annually to honor "a major journalistic contribution to our understanding of politics." The association said that the award was established "as a memorial to Carey McWilliams," who was for twenty years editor of *The Nation*. Winners will receive a cash prize of $500. The first presentation will be made at the association's annual meeting in Denver on September 2, 1982. The winner will be selected by a three-person committee, appointed by the president of the A.P.S.A. The association has set up an interest-earning fund to finance the prize, and will accept contributions, which should be sent to Carey McWilliams Award, American Political Science Association, 1527 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

This Thanksgiving, our family was finally able to sit down together and give thanks over a meal of spaghetti carbonara. It has been several years, of course, since I began my campaign to have the national Thanksgiving dish changed from turkey to spaghetti carbonara—I love spaghetti carbonara—but until now invitations to have Thanksgiving dinner at friends' houses prevented our family from practicing what I preached. This year, nobody invited us over for Thanksgiving dinner—my wife's theory being that word got around town that I always make a pest of myself berating the hostess for serving turkey instead of spaghetti carbonara. In my defense, I should say that my daughters do not believe that our lack of invitations has anything at all to do with my insistence on bringing the spaghetti carbonara issue to the attention of the American public at any appropriate opportunity. They believe it may have something to do with my tendency to spill cranberry sauce on my tie.

I'll admit that my campaign might have been inspired partly by my belief that turkey is basically something college dormitories use to punish students for hanging around on Sunday. I'll admit that early in the campaign I brought up some advantages that are only esthetic—the fact, for instance, that the President would not be photographed every year receiving a large platter of spaghetti carbonara from the Eastern Association of Spaghetti Carbonara Growers. As King Vittorio Emmanuelle once said to his Chancellor of the Exchequer, "Spaghetti doesn't grow on trees." I'll admit that I would love to see what those masters of the float maker's art at Macy's might come up with as a 300-square-foot depiction of a plate of spaghetti carbonara. I'll admit that I'd find it refreshing to hear sports announcers call some annual tussle the Spaghetti Carbonara Day Classic.

My campaign, though, has been based also on deeper historical and philcsophical considerations. Nobody knows if the Pilgrims really ate turkey at the first Thanksgiving dinner. The only thing we know for sure about what the Pilgrims ate is that it couldn't have tasted very good. They were from East Anglia, a part of England whose culinary standards are symbolized by the fact that any number of housewives there are this week serving Brussels sprouts that were put on to boil shortly after the Pilgrims left. Also, it's all very well to say that we should give thanks by eating the meal our forebears ate, but, as it happens, one of the things I give thanks for every year is that those people were not my forebears. Who wants forebears who put people in the stocks for playing the harpsichord on the Sabbath or having an innocent little game of pinch and giggle? In fact, ever since it became fashionable to dwell on the atrocities of American history—ever since, that is, we entered what the historians call The Era of Year-Round Yom Kippur—I have been more and more grateful that none of my forebears got near this place before 1906. When it comes to slavery and massacring Indians and the slaughter of the American buffalo and the assorted scandals of the Spanish-American War, my family's hands are clean. It used to be that an American who wanted to put on airs made claims about how long his family has been here. Now the only people left for a first-generation American to envy are the immigrants who arrived in the last half-dozen years. They don't even have to feel guilty about the Vietnam War.

Naturally, the whole family went over to Raffeto's pasta store on Houston Street to see the spaghetti cut. It's important, I think, to have these holiday rituals. As the meal began, I asked the children if they had any questions about our forebears.

"Was Uncle Benny responsible for the First World War just because he was already in St. Jo then?" my younger daughter asked.

"Not directly," I said. "He didn't have his citizenship."

"Is it really true that your grandparents got mixed up about American holidays and used to have a big turkey dinner on the Fourth of July and shoot fireworks off in the park on Thanksgiving?" my older daughter asked.

"At least they had nothing to do with snookering the Indians out of Massachusetts," I said. "Be thankful for that."

Then, as is traditional, I told the children the story of the first Thanksgiving:

In England a long time ago, there were people called Pilgrims who were very strict about making sure everyone observed the Sabbath and nobody cooked food with any flavor and that sort of thing, and they decided to go to America where they could enjoy Freedom to Nag. The other people in England said "Glad to see the back of them," and put on some Brussels sprouts to boil in case any of their descendants craved a veggie in 1981. In America, the Pilgrims tried farming, but they couldn't get much done because they were always putting each other in the stocks for crimes like Suspicion of Cheerfulness. The Indians took pity on the Pilgrims and helped them with their farming, even though the Indians thought the Pilgrims were about as much fun as a teen-age circumcision. The Pilgrims were so grateful that they invited the Indians over for a Thanksgiving meal, and the Indians, having had some experience with Pilgrim cuisine in the past, took the precaution of bringing along one dish of their own. They brought a dish that their ancestors had learned many generations before from none other than Christopher Columbus, who was known to the Indians as "the big Italian fella." The dish was spaghetti carbonara—made with pancetta bacon and fontina and the best imported prosciutto. The Pilgrims hated it. They said it was "heretically tasty" and "the work of the devil" and "the sort of thing foreigners eat." The Indians were so disgusted that on the way back to their village after dinner one of them made a remark about the Pilgrims that was repeated for generations and unfortunately caused confusion among historians about the first Thanksgiving meal. He said "What a bunch of turkeys!"

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ARTICLES.

THE 20-CENT STAMP CAPER

Price Fixing by The Postal Service

RALPH NADER

The new 20-cent first-class stamp represents not only runaway postal costs but also the unchecked power of the Postal Service. The new rate came about because the mail system's Board of Governors deliberately overrode the Postal Rate Commission (P.R.C.), which, on three separate occasions, had found the latest increase unnecessary. We can only conclude that the Postal Service is no longer accountable to anyone—not to the P.R.C., not to the President, not to Congress and certainly not to the American people.

In 1970, Congress reorganized the Post Office Department as an independent agency within the government known as the Postal Service. The intention was to increase efficiency, keep down costs and rates and take politics out of the U.S. Post Office. But the passage of the Postal Reorganization Act meant that the public had lost its voice in postal affairs. Congress and the executive branch relinquished their authority to appoint postmasters, build post offices, buy land for facilities and, most important of all, set rates.

When Congress controlled postal fees, increases were infrequent. From 1919 until 1932, first-class postage remained at 2 cents. In the next thirty-six years, from 1932 until 1968, the price rose by only 3 cents. Under the reorganization plan, the five-member P.R.C. was to take over Congress' function of overseeing rates. But the commission has had little success in holding down increases. Before reorganization, the first-class rate was 6 cents; it rose to 8 cents in 1971, to 10 cents in 1974, to 13 cents in 1975, to 15 cents in 1978, to 18 cents in March of this year and to 20 cents in November.

The rates have climbed so rapidly largely because the P.R.C. was not given sufficient power. Though ostensibly an independent regulatory body, the P.R.C. is in reality not autonomous. Its budget is determined by the Postal Service Board of Governors. It has no subpoena power to compel an often secretive postal bureaucracy to produce the information it needs. The P.R.C. is not empowered to sue and must be represented in court by the Justice Department. Since the department also represents the Postal Service, conflicts between the two are difficult to litigate.

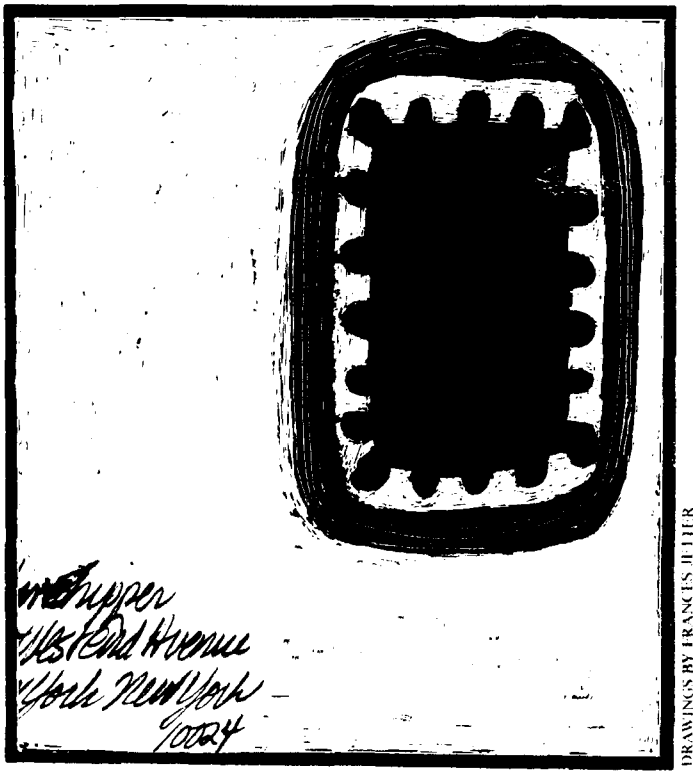
Above all, the P.R.C. does not have final authority over rates. The commissioners hold months of hearings, taking testimony from all sides, before arriving at their decision. But this finding is subject to the Board of Governors' approval. The governors can accept the P.R.C.'s decision or send it back for further consideration. And even after the commission has reconsidered, the governors, by a unanimous vote, can still reject its recommendations. That was precisely what happened when the price of first-class stamps was raised to 20 cents.

Former P.R.C. chairman A. Lee Fritschler has called this process "kind of silly." Speaking to the Federation of National Associations last August, Fritschler said, "The governors can go into a closet. They have no staff. They are briefed by [the] U.S. Postal Service counsel and general staff members who introduced the rate package in the first place. If they can get a unanimous vote, they can overturn the commission's decision."

In voting for the 20-cent stamp, the governors overrode the P.R.C.'s recommendation that the rate remain at 18 cents. After ten months of hearings, the commission ruled that the Postal Service had asked for about $1 billion more than it really needed, and so the higher rate was unnecessary.

A few days before the P.R.C.'s decision was announced, amid rumors that the Postal Service might not get its 20-cent stamp, Postmaster General William F. Bolger told the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., that if the commission did not grant an increase, Congress should seriously consider abolishing it.

Clearly, the Postal Service would like nothing better than to rid itself of even the small bit of oversight that the P.R.C. now exercises. The governors are irked because, for the first



DRAWINGS BY FRANCES HUTTER

Ralph Nader, the noted consumer advocate and lecturer, is most recently co-editor, with Ronald Brownstein and John Richard, of Who's Poisoning America *(Sierra Club).*

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time in the commission's ten-year history, it dared to challenge the Postal Service's authority. The P.R.C. had acted like a true regulatory body, taking the public interest into account and trying to stop spiraling postal costs, which fall most heavily on users of first-class mail.

The governors' reaction was to put the commission in its place as though it were an unruly child. The Postal Service simply instituted the rate it wanted and ignored the well-reasoned P.R.C. opinion that the increase was unjustified. In his concurring opinion, Fritschler pointed out, "The larger-than-needed revenue requirement [will be] borne by first-class mailers to keep the rates for all classes from going up for an extended period. This strikes me as an attempt by the Postal Service to use first-class revenues to cross-subsidize the other classes of mail, in contravention of the Postal Reorganization Act."

The charge of cross-subsidization is a longstanding and well-founded one. Under the present rate-making system, the different classes of mail are pitted against one another; lower rates for one means higher rates for another. Since the reorganization in 1970, increases in rates for second-, third- and fourth-class mail have lagged behind those for first class. That was dramatically demonstrated this year when the governors set temporary rates while deciding whether to modify the P.R.C. decision. Under those rates, in effect from March 22 to November 1, the cost of first-class mail went from 15 cents to 18 cents while second- and third-class rates were actually lowered. Bolger claims that each class must pay its own way and that inflation accounts for most of the increases. But why would inflation affect one class and not others?

In fact, the Postal Service is acting like the giant monopoly it is. It uses revenues from first-class mail, where it has a monopoly of service, to hold down rates for second-, third- and fourth-class mail, where it faces growing competition. The new rates provide for no increase in parcel post costs, for example, a category in which the Postal Service has long faced vigorous competition from United Parcel Service.

With its latest rate hike, the Postal Service continues the ten-year trend of declining service and dramatically rising rates (all the while claiming a marked increase in productivity). Although the immediate loser is the first-class postal user, the big loser over the long run is likely to be the Postal Service itself, for first-class mail volume will surely decline as a result of higher rates. And volume for all classes of mail could start to fall if the Postal Service continues its present policy of increasing rates. It stubbornly rejects the sensible alternative, which would be to lower rates, thus encouraging greater volume and smaller unit processing costs.

The case of the 20-cent stamp illustrates what must be done to avoid steadily rising rates in the future. Congress must amend the Postal Reorganization Act to give the P.R.C. the powers of a true regulatory agency, including the authority to make the final decision on rates, subject only to judicial review. It must be funded from general revenues—not, as is now the case, by the Postal Service. The P.R.C. needs subpoena power and the right to represent its positions in court. Although the Reagan Administration has shown itself unsympathetic to regulation, its get-the-government-off-the-backs-of-business rhetoric is hardly applicable here, where the "business" in need of regulation is a creature of government.

Finally, and most important of all, the public should be represented before the P.R.C. by a body comparable to the Citizens' Utility Board in Wisconsin, which represents consumers before the utility commission, the courts and the legislature. A first-class users group should be formed, and a simple Federal law passed requiring the Postal Service once or twice a year to deliver letters to every residence and business inviting all first-class users to join. Members of the group would pay modest annual dues, which would be used to retain a full-time national and regional staff of advocates. Not surprisingly, Bolger has announced his opposition to such a proposal.*

Only when the commission and postal consumers have adequate powers can the Postal Service overcome its self-destructive inclinations and fulfill the great promise of modern technology, which is to create a true mass communication system used by all the people. □

*Readers interested in learning more about an organization to represent first-class users should write Kathleen Conkey, P.O. Box 19312, Washington, D.C. 20036. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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AWACS AFTERMATH

Reviving the Politics of Anti-Semitism

CARA GENDEL RYAN

The debate on the Senate floor in October about the sale of five Awacs planes and sundry items of military hardware to Saudi Arabia teetered on the brink of anti-Semitism. At the eleventh hour, it appeared that some senators would revive the "Jewish question" and use it as European politicians did in the latter part of the nineteenth century to obfuscate the real issues. The language of the President and a handful of "troubled" senators was at once vague, suggestive and coercive. "The perception is that there's been undue pressure from the American Jewish community," said Senator Steven Symms, an Idaho Republican who supported the $8.5 billion sale. "I don't say that's a reality. I haven't had any undue pressure from anybody. But the perception will be wiped out if the President wins." History teaches otherwise, however.

The origins of modern anti-Semitism are the subject of controversy among historians, but the term itself was coined by a failed journalist from Hamburg named Wilhelm Marr, who, in 1879, founded the short-lived Antisemiten Liga, or League of Anti-Semites, the first political movement devoted to hatred of the Jews. Marr gave political expression to a prejudice that had been spreading throughout France, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire since France's edict of 1792 emancipating the Jews. "The word anti-Semitism," wrote the historian Emil Reich in 1896, does not denote "the persecution of that kind of Jew which was set upon in the previous centuries. It is, I think, the persecution of the reformed Jew, of the emancipated Jew."

Whatever its origins, the nature of modern anti-Semitism has not changed since the crash of 1873 and the financial scandals that rocked the Continent in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War. Even the language of anti-Semitism, a mixture of nineteenth-century pseudohistorical, pseudoscientific and pseudosociological jargon, has remained unaltered to the present day, in spite of the precise and painful knowledge of where such "talk" can lead. And as the Reagan Administration demonstrated in the Awacs controversy, the political potency of anti-Semitism has not diminished since Chancellor Bismarck deliberately appealed to anti-Semitism in 1879 in order to control the Reichstag. The only variables in the poisonous brew of anti-Semitism are time, place and intensity. "Which group of people would turn anti-Semitic in a given country at a given historical moment," wrote Hannah Arendt in *Origins of Totalitarianism*, "depended exclusively upon general circumstances. . . . [But] we find the Jews always represented as an international trade organization, a world-wide family concern with identical interests everywhere, a secret force behind the throne which degrades all visible governments into mere facades, or into marionettes whose strings are manipulated from behind the scenes."

In this country, a belief in the unlikely possibility that a community of more than 6 million Jews could monolithically support a single opinion and have a total identity of interests is certainly not unique to the current Administration. During the 1978 fight in Congress over President Jimmy

Cara Gendel Ryan is working on a book about the fate of Italian Jews under Fascism.

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Carter's proposal to sell sixty (later sixty-two) F-15 fighter jets to Saudi Arabia, the ultimately unsuccessful campaign waged by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee was viewed by some as an example of the formidable resources and stamina of what was referred to as the "Jewish lobby." President Ronald Reagan, however, escalated his battle for the Awacs into a nasty looking-glass war by calling an ethnic, grass-roots lobby "foreign" and portraying its pursuit of Senate support as antithetical to the national interest.

"Identification of interest between the rulers and the ruled," wrote John Stuart Mill in his essay "Democracy and Government," "being . . . in a literal sense, impossible to be realized, ought not to be spoken of as a condition which a government must absolutely fulfill; but as an end to be incessantly aimed at, and approximated to as nearly as circumstances render possible." The supporters of Israel in this country and Israel's representatives from abroad are seeking to bring the government's interests into line with their own. This is a legitimate function of lobbies. Moreover, the close emotional, economic and political ties that have bound the United States to Israel for the last thirty years are properly represented by both a domestic Jewish lobby and a foreign Israeli lobby. By willfully confusing the activities of the former with those of the latter, the Administration and its allies in Congress have revived the scurrilous charges of "cosmopolitanism" and "disloyalty" that have been used against Jews in the past.

Even though President Reagan has won his Awacs victory, the "perception" that a Jewish or "foreign" lobby tried to divert Congress from its patriotic duty will not vanish without a trace, as Senator Symms would have us believe. The President's remark, "It is not the business of other nations to make American foreign policy," will not fade from American memory, just as the epithets "nation within a nation" and "state within a state" that surfaced at the Congress of Vienna have not been forgotten after 166 years. Reagan's words have entered the political discourse, and they will be used again. Once loosed, anti-Semitism tends to hover in the atmosphere.

How does one calculate the level of anti-Semitism in a country? asked Jacobo Timerman in a recent article in *Harper's* titled "The Silence of the Jews." An opponent of the Awacs sale, Mark Hatfield, Republican of Oregon and chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said that, judging from his mail and conversations with people in his state, there is a great deal of "latent anti-Semitism" in this country "just waiting for a trigger mechanism" to set it off. One way to trigger latent anti-Jewish sentiment would be to evoke it deliberately in conjunction with an important political issue. "In every . . . nation," wrote James Madison in *The Federalist Papers*, "the most rational government will not find it a superfluous advantage to have the prejudices of the community on its side."

The conservative governments and parliaments of late nineteenth-century Central and Western Europe saw the utility of this kind of demagogy. Buckling under the strains of an increasingly liberal electorate, the seditious rumblings of the *ancien régime*, rapid industrialization and the pell-mell pursuit of wealth and material comfort, politicians discovered, as Bismarck did, that combining the "Jewish question" with other political or social questions served to resolve party and class differences, coalesce reactionary and centrist factions, forge bonds between Protestants and

WRITERS CONGRESS RECORD

So that the many important things said at the American Writers Congress do not vanish from our memories, and so that those who weren't there can sample its flavors, we will publish excerpts from the proceedings from time to time.

—The Editors

So Vulnerable, So Invulnerable

"Right after the military takeover in Chile, in September 1973, I went into hiding, moving from house to house. I finally ended up at the home of a worker in a slum area in Santiago, a man I had never met before. His son led me to a small shed in the backyard and asked me to be quiet during the daytime. If the soldiers come, he told me, try to escape. He drew a rather intricate little map for me—where I was to go, how I was to get there. Then he left me. I stared at the map in disbelief. I hadn't registered a thing. It had dawned on me while he talked that if the soldiers did come, and if they caught me, I was through. There could be no possible explanation for my being there. My languages, my university degree, my books, even my racial and facial demeanor would not protect me.

"After a while, I simply shrugged my shoulders. This is where my writing had finally brought me, I thought, a place where you cannot escape your past or your choices, where words cannot save you.

"So I spent the next few days reading. The shed was full of books. Most of them were books I had helped to publish as an adviser to Salvador Allende's state publishing house, which had brought out more books in two and a half years than in all the previous history of Chile. Among the books, I even found one or two of my own.

"I think we have here a symbol of what writing is about, and what unites us all as writers. My books could not protect me from torture or death. Not at all. They might even be the cause. But they were there, no matter what happened to me. They were being read by so many people I had never met. We are so vulnerable and so invulnerable. We are so strong and we are so weak.

"At least let's be strong and vulnerable together."

—Ariel Dorfman, exiled Chilean novelist, American Writers Congress, October 9-12.

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Catholics, and facilitate the passage of all manner of legislation, none of which had anything to do with the Jews.

In converting the soft currency of anti-Jewish sentiment to the hard currency of political anti-Semitism in order to buy the Senate's loyalty, the Reagan Administration has drawn upon a grim nineteenth-century legacy of political obscurantism, opportunism and the obsessive desire for national unity. In doing so, it risks polarizing society and returning the country to a Hobbesian state of nature where "every man is Enemy to every man."

THE FEMINIST PAPERS III

Now is the Time To Get Organized

The following articles by Frances Lear and Mim Kelber are the last in a series on the future of the feminist movement. Previous statements by Ellen Willis, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Bella Abzug, and Linda Gordon and Marla Erlien appeared in our November 14 and November 28 issues.

—The Editors

FRANCES LEAR

And so the first act is ended. Beginning without the Equal Rights Amendment and ending without the Equal Rights Amendment, the first phase of the women's movement is over. It was, at times, a glittering first act. Feminist theory was heard round the world and, many believe, took hold in the consciousnesses of all but a few women—and men—in this country.

Not all of the first act was as one might have wished. There was much anger in the hearts of first-stage feminists and, justified or not, it was not pleasant to see. Then there was the catastrophic mistake of making the E.R.A. a women's issue, which it is not, instead of a family issue, which it is. In the early days of the movement, that error endangered many relationships between women and men. Husbands and wives squared off at breakfast, prepared to do day-long battle. Though no smarter than women, the men were far better negotiators, which was understandable since they held most of the deck. No one sought divisiveness; it came with the territory. "Equality" was mistaken for "parity"; "like" was substituted for "equivalent." Hostility reigned. A measure of hostility continues, inherent in issues such as equal pay for work of comparable value and affirmative-action hiring. And some men, uncomfortable in egalitarian relationships, seek to postpone that eventuality through right-wing, church-inspired political resistance.

On the upside was the enactment of legislation to protect the civil rights of women and to provide them with employment opportunities. One holds one's breath as rumors of repeals and regulatory setbacks threaten to return the workplace to a revival meeting for discriminatory practices.

The valiant heart of feminism revealed itself early on in such stunning acts as the *Newsweek* sex-discrimination confrontation, the Title VII class-action suit against A.T.&T., the white-clad marches for the E.R.A., Sonia Johnson's excommunication from the Mormon Church and Mary Crisp's denunciation of the party platform at the 1980 Republican National Convention. Feminism has had a generous share of heroes, but the 1980 elections proved that it does not have clout.

The wholesale defeat of feminist candidates last year rocked us to the core. Women had failed to deliver the women's vote. Defeat had begun to loom long before November 4, however. The middle-class biases of the movement had made it irrelevant to many women. The search for "self-fulfillment" advocated by feminist writers (many of whom had never worked in politics or in labor unions and had never lived in poverty) eventually isolated them from the large majority of women, for whom the gut issues are economic.

With passion but not enough else, our forces fanned out across the country to lobby for the E.R.A., naïvely believing that they could close the sale with passion alone. Even professional lobbyists would have had trouble cracking through the prejudice of many state legislators, but the feminist volunteers never had a chance.

It has been too long between wins. Somehow, feminists are not hearing the lesson that twentieth-century America shouts in our ears—winning, being number one, is all that counts. It may be a good thing for the future of humankind if it is in the nature of women to place less emphasis on winning than men do, but it bodes ill for the future of women's rights. With the likelihood that the E.R.A. will not be ratified and God knows what surprises ahead in anti-abortion legislation, the strategists had best pick a sure thing for their next target.

On November 5, the day after we had lost everything, Bella Abzug told me that we had to "go back to our states and to Congressional districts and down to the precincts. *We must organize.*" Gloria Steinem declared, "We are the majority. We will win." And Eleanor Smeal said, "We must fill the state legislatures with our people to keep the proposed anti-abortion amendment from ever being ratified and to get three more states for the E.R.A. Every race in every state legislature is crucial to our cause. *Organize.*"

In this new phase of the movement, Betty Friedan is focusing on the family. She is inspired by the generation of women who teethed on Simone de Beauvoir and *The Feminine Mystique*, women who are now in their 30s, pursuing careers and possessed by a deep-seated unwillingness to trade women's rights for estrangement from men. Friedan insists that the early feminists were anti-men. I do not agree. We were—and still are—not against men but against *oppression* by men.

Some of us, eager to rid the movement of negative images, will preach anonymity as a priority. But our fundamental need is for a collective feminist persona that radiates good will. Some feminists attack "special interest"

Frances Lear is a writer and feminist activist.

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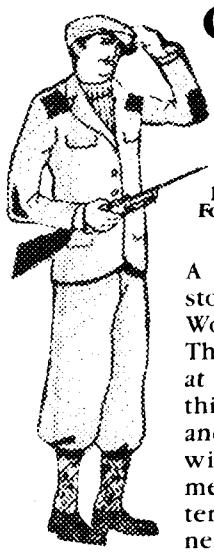
groups, primarily the lesbians, because their movement co-opts feminist resources. Although gay rights may belong on the humanist feminist agenda, gay political activities need to be separate. Admittedly, such a division could prove a hardship to the movement, since lesbians make up a large portion of the volunteer work force.

Grass-roots organizing is the progressive password these days. Moderates and liberals agree, for once. Blacks, Hispanics, even Michael Harrington's socialists are talking about budgets and "targeting" and "coalescing." Scratch any liberal funder or fund-raiser, and you will find a commitment to grass-roots projects with which they intend to green their political world. The hope for 1982 and 1984 lies in organizing, and women make up the largest political constituency in the nation. How can we appeal to the broadest spectrum of them?

I would like to see a new attitude among the feminist leadership. This is not a simple matter for a community of women who are nothing if not opinionated. And who among us is willing to tell the stars that it is time to retire the star system, time to hand the feminist movement over to the women it serves? If we cannot find a way to involve blue-collar women, office workers, housewives, minority women and poor women in the movement, feminism will wither and die. If the wealthy women—and their money—cannot be counted on to support the struggle for economic rights for the poor, the movement can offer little hope to the millions of women and children living in poverty.



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The problems are stacked high. Not the least of these is a lack of unity among the various women's organizations. Each remains loyal to its own agenda. The National Organization for Women lists ratification of the E.R.A. as its first priority and opposition to the proposed anti-abortion legislation as its second. The pro-choice groups continue to work for the election of their candidates to state legislatures and have stepped up their lobbying in Congress. The National Women's Political Caucus (unhappily a shell of its former competent self) supports feminist candidates. Each organization, rightly or wrongly, believes that its survival is linked to its particular agenda, and so an agreement to respect one another's turf has evolved. But deference to claims of turf does not vitiate the widespread consensus on the importance of organizing feminists at the grass-roots level.

Thus, the scenario for the second act begins. Trying to enter at the middle or even the top of the political process was a painful mistake. Since women are understandably averse to starting and perhaps getting stuck at the bottom, the decision to do exactly that took courage. But it will be no simple matter to convince leading feminist activists, many of whom live in Washington, D.C., to return to their home towns and build grass-roots capabilities that might be years in the making.

But that is precisely what must happen. Some of us argue that the women's movement should pattern itself after the labor movement, that we should think of our movement as an economic one and use economic tactics—primarily the boycott, the most powerful weapon next to the strike—to attain our economic rights. As a result of NOW's boycott of states that have not ratified the E.R.A., Miami has been severely hurt by a drop in convention business. The city passed an ordinance forbidding sex discrimination, but NOW, not satisfied with anything less than ratification, is continuing the boycott. That, without question, constitutes clout.

The success of efforts to get out the women's vote will require more than organizing ability. It will take a new breed of feminist to "sell" movement-inspired political action to the woman next door. No less committed, no less idealistic, the new feminist should take a pragmatic and rational approach to politics with the awareness that anger was appropriate to another time. Militancy, once an attention-grabber for feminist ills, now must be put to constructive uses.

The combined thinking of new and old feminists—all women of like mind—must be directed toward easing the fear that economic gains for women mean economic losses for men. Yesterday's debate about whether or not women with children should work outside the home may be revived, but the new emphasis on shared responsibility by family members is paying off in healthier psyches of children and enhancing the well-being of parents. Many new feminists will also be men.

What is wrong with the old feminist? Since I am one, I am inclined to reply charitably. The old feminist represents a part of myself that I have put away. The reflexive,

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hostile put-down of men and the persistent whine of the victim have no place in the second act of the women's movement. Instead, let there be wisdom, softness, caring and strength by the good women who will volunteer their time to knock on doors, to get out the vote, to help our candidates win.

What is feminism's future? All we need is clout, leverage, heft. All we need is to organize the country. All we need is consensus among the organizers. All we need is a new feminist image. All we need is a group of well-to-do women, and men, to raise a couple of million dollars. For openers.

I remember as a small child marching down Fifth Avenue in New York City on Labor Day with thousands of union members. There were no bands playing, no flags flying. It was grim. They meant business, those men and women. And so did my classmates and I. Kids walking in step with grownups. I believed then that being in that march made a difference, that I was part of an unarmed attack on injustice. In the farthest recess of my mind, I still believe it. If enough women recognize their connection to history, they can damn well change the course of it.

It is tough to be patient, but for the first time since the movement began, the means to the end are clear. All we need now are the numbers. □

Peace—the Top Priority

MIM KELBER

In Western Europe, women are organizing and marching in antinuclear demonstrations to protest U.S. plans to make their homelands the staging ground for a "limited nuclear war." But leaders of mainstream women's rights groups in the United States have yet to speak out substantively about the White House cold-war policies that threaten to make the 1980s a time of unprecedented world peril.

Although most American women's rights leaders are antiwar and oppose Ronald Reagan's huge increases in military spending, especially since they have been accompanied by cuts in social programs affecting women and children, they are reluctant to make the military-industrial colossus a feminist issue. Yet militarism is the supreme expression of male dominance, the ultimate in pornographic excitement. (In a letter to *Ms.* magazine last April, an Army wife reported having seen in her husband's office a map of a field exercise with the coordinating points labeled: "Breast, Murder, Plunder, Pillage, Burn, Kill, Rape, Incest.")

In *The Second Stage*, Betty Friedan transforms this reality into a rhapsodic vision of a born-again Pentagon. The first stage of women's quest for equality "is over," she says, as is the women's movement itself. In the "second stage," Friedan announces grandly, women must no longer struggle in terms of their "separate personhood or equality with men." Instead, they must seek to transcend sex-role polarization in a way that "will restructure institutions and transform the nature of power itself." She sees men "at the cutting edge" of this second stage, and finds her allies not only among young men willing to share household and child-care tasks but among male leaders in such unlikely places as corporate board rooms and the Pentagon.

Friedan describes a visit last year to West Point, where the Academy's first class of women cadets was about to graduate. Although hostility to the women was evident among the male cadets, Friedan found that Pentagon strategists were increasingly relying on women soldiers in their plans for "national survival." As a result, she said, the Academy officers' training approach was shifting from an emphasis on the development of such traditional male qualities as physical strength and authoritarianism to the development of more "female" qualities among the cadets.

"I leave West Point," she writes, ". . . feeling safer somehow because powerful nuclear weapons that can destroy the world and the new human strategies therefore needed to defend this nation will henceforward be in the hands of women and men who are, with agony, breaking through to a new strength, strong enough to be sensitive and tender to the evolving needs and values of human life."

Will women tenderly and sensitively push the nuclear button? Will they convert the armed services into a Peace Corps? Or, more to the point, will Reagan, Alexander Haig and Caspar Weinberger invite women to Pentagon strategy sessions or to arms-control talks with the Russians? Friedan doesn't ask these questions, preferring to discuss how the "new male-female second stage mode" can be used to "bridge the old conservative-liberal chasm." Behind her phrase-making is a collapse of courage. That is not the case with other feminist leaders. Courage, passion and determination abound. Their restraint in identifying militarism as the most profound enemy of women's "personhood" stems rather from a preoccupation with pragmatic tactics and respectability, as well as from a desire to retain corporate support and the backing of occasional "liberated" Republicans like Betty Ford, a prominent speaker at Equal Rights Amendment rallies.

During the National Organization for Women's recent annual conference in Washington, D.C., the leadership organized the defeat of a resolution that described eligibility for the draft as "not an equal right . . . [but] a violation of an individual's rights." Submitted by 456 delegates and backed by the New Jersey, New York State and San Francisco chapters, the resolution was accompanied by a position paper, which said: "We don't want to share equally in the power of oppression. We don't want 50% of the fingers on the nuclear button to be women's; we don't want any fingers on that button."

However, while a majority of the delegates reaffirmed NOW's opposition to draft registration, they in-

Mim Kelber, a writer on feminist issues, is currently at work on Women and Man-Made Wars.

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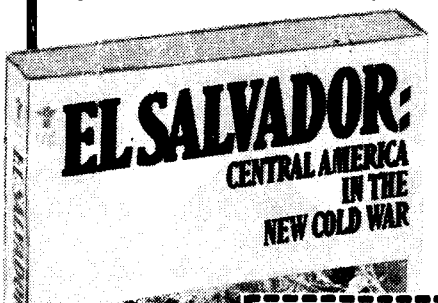

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sisted that so long as it is in effect, women should be included. The organization's leaders believe that the price of victory for the E.R.A. is a willingness to make the same sacrifices as men.

In the next few years, as Congress dispenses billions of dollars to military contractors, women's rights groups will inevitably find themselves fighting for equal employment opportunities for women to produce the MX missile, the neutron bomb, the B-1 bomber and other weapons of mass murder. Certainly, women should not be discriminated against in hiring, pay or promotion. But the end result of a blind faith in "equity" within a corrupt and destructive system will be to degrade more working women by making them apologists for militarism, as are so many present-day aircraft and munitions workers.

It is because women are not yet locked into the system that they are better positioned to challenge its reliance on military solutions. They are still free to develop their own peace initiatives and to reach out to women in Europe, the socialist nations, the Middle East and the Third World, where the predominantly male leaders see strength primarily in the bomb and military buildups.

I am not suggesting that women set aside their immediate goals of winning constitutional equality, safeguarding the right to abortion and protecting diversity in family and sexual relationships, nor that they cease working on the dozens of programs needed to overcome generations of economic, political, social and racial discrimination. Organizing women around economic issues should receive more emphasis. But women must lift up their eyes to the wider world of danger and demonstrate that their belief in justice for women is also suffused with concern for the survival of humankind. Women are leaders of women. They can also be leaders of men and can work with them, as they have in the past. But women dare not trust male policy makers to speak for women's concerns. They have their own impetus for peace based on the unique female experience in centuries of man-made wars.

Polls have consistently shown that American women are stauncher supporters of peace than are men, and the Reagan Administration's policies have strengthened that commitment. Despite the lack of leadership at the top, there has been a renaissance of organized peace activity recently among feminists and nonfeminists. Local conferences have been held on feminism and militarism; the traditional women's peace groups have been more active and are reporting a heartening response; a younger generation of militantly antiwar feminists is emerging. Women's Pentagon Action staged a demonstration encircling the Pentagon on November 16, as it did last year. Again, there were mass arrests and jailings of women who blocked entry by weaving barriers across the stairways leading to the building's doors.

Contrary to Freidan's prescription, the "second stage" for women does not mean hoping for a feminization of the Pentagon or liquidating the women's movement; it means preparing for struggle, organizing and working toward national leadership in the growing movement of resistance to all that Reaganism represents. □

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Government

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

To begin with, welfare involves a means test. All such programs, whether for the "needy" poor or for well-off farmers and other beneficiaries of the subsidies that Michael Harrington calls "socialism for the rich," are necessarily subject to corruption. And in the case of programs intended to help the poor, there is a terrible embitterment of relations between those who are barely eligible and those who don't quite qualify. But there is a more profound problem with welfare. Beneath the layers of hypocrisy of both its detractors and its supporters, the essential purpose of welfare, American style, is to make a life without work possible for those for whom the rest of us have absolutely no intention of finding work—whose permanent unemployment, or semipermanent unemployment alternating with periods of ill-paid and unpleasant work, is intended to consign them to the sizable reserve army of labor that our society requires. Few people on welfare are trained to do well-paying work, nor is such work even available for all who might want to sacrifice immediate income to acquire the necessary skills. Thus welfare expenditures are exactly what they are widely perceived to be: a drain on the national economy. But the reason for the drain is not that we devote too much effort to social policy but that we don't devote enough.

A person at work is productive; in a well-ordered economy, most working people produce roughly the equivalent of enough goods and services to provide not only for themselves but for someone else as well (if only the employer who extracts surplus value from their work in the form of profit). To put people to work benefits them and the economy; to keep people out of work, or to force them to choose between not working and doing useless, ill-paid work, degrades and demoralizes them and hurts the economy. Aside from the elderly, the hopelessly ill, the handicapped and single parents of very young children (who ought to be supported by any society that considers itself civilized), most unemployed people don't work because, in an economic structure that honors profits rather than providing for human need, employers won't hire them when it is unprofitable to do so. The costs of this system, not only in production foregone but in disproportionate demands made by the welfare population on the health-care and penal systems, for example, are immense.

Moreover, although the welfare system seems primarily the product of an inegalitarian class structure, its size, nature and consequent unpopularity are exacerbated by other social inequalities, specifically those based on sex and race. Welfare recipients are disproportionately female, and that disproportion is directly tied to the subordinate position of women in the American job market (where they are paid, on the average, 59 cents for every $1 earned by men, compared with a ratio of 89 cents to $1 in Sweden). Welfare recipients are also disproportionately black (although blacks are being joined by Hispanics, Asians and other minorities), and that disproportion too is a direct outcome of both widespread discrimination in housing and employment and the national failure to spend enough money on the education of young blacks to make up for more than a century of neglect.

Perhaps the most important effect of discrimination-based inequality is the disproportionate number of blacks (and Hispanics), especially unemployed or marginally employed young black (and Hispanic) men, who engage in the kinds of antisocial and criminal behavior that necessitate large expenditures of taxpayers' dollars by educational institutions and housing authorities (for security, repairs of damage caused by vandalism and the like) and, above all, by the law-enforcement and penal systems. The average white taxpayer is bombarded daily by the media with images depicting the interrelationship of race, welfare and crime. As a result, it begins to appear that the welfare system subsidizes people who commit crimes, the costs of which become a further burden on the innocent taxpayer. The links between inequality and crime are complex, but those who deny that they are related (a view that has the imprimatur of the President of the United States) need only ask themselves how frightened they would be if, while walking down, say, Nassau Street in Princeton, New Jersey, late at night, they met two young black men wearing Princeton University sweatshirts and carrying books.

The tax structure, another source of dissatisfaction with government, is also awash in inegalitarianism. The taxes upon which all levels of our government rely most heavily are the property tax and the progressive income tax; these

Philip Green, a member of The Nation*'s Editorial Board, is the author most recently of* Pursuit of Inequality *(Pantheon).*

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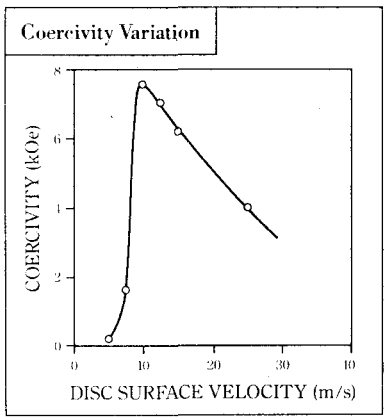
The Critical Interval

There has long been a need in the industrial world for low-cost, high-performance permanent magnets. Recent discoveries at the General Motors Research Laboratories show promise of meeting this challenge by the application of new preparation techniques to new materials.



Coercivity of $Pr_{0.4}Fe_{0.6}$ plotted as a function of disc surface velocity.

Color-enhanced transmission electron micrograph of melt-spun $Nd_{0.4}Fe_{0.6}$ having 7.5 kOe coercivity.

TWO properties characterize desirable permanent magnets: large coercivity (magnetic hardness or resistance to demagnetization) and high remanence (magnetic strength). Higher-performance magnets are required to reduce further the size and weight of a wide variety of electrical devices, including d.c. motors. Such magnets are available, but the cost of the materials necessary to produce them severely limits their use. The research challenge is to select, synthesize, and magnetically harden economically attractive materials of comparable quality.

Prominent among alternative materials candidates are alloys composed of iron and the abundant light rare earths (lanthanum, cerium, praseodymium, neodymium). Investigations conducted by Drs. John Croat and Jan Herbst at the General Motors Research Laboratories have led to the discovery of a method for magnetically hardening these alloys. By means of a rapid-quench technique, the researchers have achieved coercivities in Pr-Fe and Nd-Fe that are the largest ever reported for any rare earth-iron material.

Drs. Croat and Herbst selected praseodymium-iron and neodymium-iron based upon fundamental considerations which indicate that these alloys would exhibit properties conducive to permanent magnet development. These properties include ferromagnetic alignment of the rare earth and iron magnetic moments, which would foster high remanence, and significant magnetic anisotropy, a crucial prerequisite for large coercivity.

That these materials do not form suitable crystalline compounds, an essential requirement for magnetic hardening by traditional methods, presents a major obstacle. Drs. Croat and Herbst hypothesized that a metastable phase having the necessary properties could be formed by cooling a molten alloy at a sufficiently

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rapid rate. They tested this idea by means of the melt-spinning technique, in which a molten alloy is directed onto a cold, rotating disc. The cooling rate, which can be varied by changing the surface velocity of the disc, can easily approach 100,000°C per second. The alloy emerges in the form of a ribbon.

THE researchers found that variations of the cooling rate can dramatically affect the magnetic properties of the solidified alloys. In particular, appreciable coercivity is achieved within a narrow interval of quench rate.

Equally remarkable, synthesis and magnetic hardening, two steps in conventional processing, can be achieved simultaneously.

"X-ray analysis and electron microscopy of the high coercivity alloys reveal an unexpected mixed microstructure," states Dr. Croat. "We observe elongated amorphous regions interspersed with a crystalline rare earth-iron compound."

Understanding the relationship between the coercivity and the microstructure is essential. The two scientists are now studying the extent to which the coercivity is controlled by the shape and composition of the amorphous and crystalline structures.

"The development of significant coercivity is an important and encouraging step," says Dr. Herbst, "but practical application of these materials requires improvement of the remanence. Greater knowledge of the physics governing both properties is the key to meeting the commercial need for permanent magnets."

THE MEN BEHIND THE WORK

Drs. Croat and Herbst are Staff Research Scientists in the Physics Department at the General Motors Research Laboratories.

Dr. Croat (right) received his Ph.D. in metallurgy from Iowa State University. His research interests include the magnetic, magneto-elastic and catalytic properties of pure rare earth metals and their alloys and compounds.

Dr. Herbst (left) received his Ph.D. in physics from Cornell University. In addition to the magnetism of rare earth materials, his research interests include the theory of photo-emission and the physics of fluctuating valence compounds.

Dr. Croat joined General Motors in 1972; Dr. Herbst, in 1977.

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are also the most unpopular kinds of taxes, primarily because of their unfairness. That unfairness is most obvious in the case of the property tax, a regressive levy that hits middle- or even low-income homeowners hardest because their mortgage payments are not high enough in relation to their income to give them significant tax reductions. Even though the United States spends surprisingly little, per capita, on education (nine other advanced capitalist countries spend more), an alarming number of Americans resent the prospect of further expenditures. This form of tax resistance is almost certainly caused by the inegalitarianism of the way in which education is financed.

It may seem strange to charge the progressive income tax with inegalitarianism. The problem is not, as conventional wisdom has it, the phenomenon of "bracket creep," which primarily affects middle-income taxpayers during prolonged inflationary periods. Rather, a progressive tax is essentially an irrational, even self-contradictory, way to collect revenues in a capitalist society. The implicit promise of capitalism is that although wealth may be distributed inequitably, each person's income reflects how hard he or she works. Work hard, and you will be rewarded. The redistributive income tax, however, seems to contradict that promise, in that the "harder" you work (i.e., the higher the wage or salary you are paid), the more, marginally, taxes you have to pay. Instead of being rewarded, the hardest workers are penalized. Furthermore, in practice, the system is not all that progressive, and most people in all but the lowest brackets resent the taxes they must pay.

Why then should a capitalist state rely so heavily on this pseudoprogressive income tax? Historical causes aside, the most common justification for redistributing income through taxation has been equity—to correct wide disparities between the rich and the poor. In West Germany or Sweden, to look at two other industrialized countries, the gap between the income of the average professional and that of the average wage-earner is considerably less than it is in the United States, and thus the moral (or public-relations) case for redistributing wealth through the tax system is considerably less compelling. Even though the income tax in the United States is much less redistributive in practice than it is in theory, it is impossible to ignore the truly fantastic extremes of wealth (even earned wealth) and poverty that exist here. So inequality feeds upon itself. The more pervasive it is, the harder it is to ameliorate and the more wasteful it is of human resources that might otherwise be put to productive use.

A third cause of American cynicism about government is the intense, though deflected, popular dissatisfaction with the extent of public spending on the world's most gigantic and yet most futile military force. The widespread consensus about the "need" for greater and greater military expenditures has obscured the profoundly alienating effect that an elephantine military budget has upon civic consciousness in the nuclear age. I emphasize "nuclear age." As the history of states from ancient Sparta to modern Switzerland demonstrates, an emphasis on military strength need not be at odds with civic virtue; there was once much reason to

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believe (as the writings of such disparate figures as Machiavelli and Rousseau attest) that the two should go together. The existence of nuclear weaponry profoundly alters the situation.

Now, as never before, the criticisms leveled at the welfare system are doubly applicable to the military establishment. Dollars spent on defense could as well be burned in the streets. The purpose of these expenditures is not to "win" wars. The United States has not sought to "win" a war since 1945. Nor does all our military might make other world powers behave as we would like them to behave. U.S. military strength has accomplished almost nothing in that regard in the past thirty-five years, and the United States' influence over the actions of other nations is steadily diminishing (though its economic influence still remains profound). Nor can military spending provide a greater sense of national security. Additions to a nuclear arsenal contribute nothing to making people feel more secure; indeed, they have the opposite effect. First, they incite actual or potential enemies to enlarge their arsenals. Second, since the only possible justification for further additions to an arsenal capable of destroying the world many times over is that despite the arsenal we are not "secure," the precondition of increases in the military budget is a carefully orchestrated increment to the national sense of insecurity. Thus, underlying the clamor for more government spending for national defense is the growing awareness that more and more equals less and less.

And, as Prof. Seymour Melman has been arguing for some time without serious refutation, the advanced-technology military sector in any nation constitutes an immense drain on the economy. In his words, it "loots the means of production" by gobbling up investment capital, trained personnel and research and development funds, which then go into the production of goods that do not contribute to the overall standard of living and have little or no effect on the nonmilitary economy. Moreover, the jobs created could just as well be in the manufacture of civilian goods. A proliferating military establishment leads to stagflation, which is widely associated in the public mind with the poor performance of government in general.

Yet, although all of this sounds like a litany of disasters, it could also be regarded as an opportunity, particularly in the area of military spending. President Ronald Reagan's program of joy through strength is doomed to failure. In addition to engendering horrendous inflation, Reagan's military program is ultimately going to displease everyone—even the members of the Committee on the Present Danger. Assuming we can avoid a nuclear holocaust, all that will come of the added nuclear madness is more anxiety. The time is ripe for a concerted attack on the whole notion of security through supernuclearism. The elements of a rational military strategy, based on a moderate nuclear deterrent and costing hundreds of billions of dollars less than what the Reagan Administration has in store for us, are well known. The outlines of a coherent attack on the defense budget have already been set forth in such books as *The Price of Defense*. Such an attack on "big government" will be an important step toward rescuing the notion of collective political action.

What to do about this country's unpopular, crazy-quilt tax structure is not so obvious. The mere existence of thousands of taxing authorities is enough to daunt the most knowledgeable analyst. But the anger behind the tax revolt is real, even if its single objective of lowering taxes is simplistic (Americans being among the *least* taxed citizens of the advanced industrial nations). The only reasonable alternative to tax revolt is tax reform based on a clear distinction between wealthy taxpayers and average taxpayers and between special favors and general exemptions, and on a recognition of the need to develop tax sources that do not (as does the residential property tax in its present form) seem to impose a steadily mounting penalty on those who achieve the culturally approved goal of owning their own homes.

Obviously, a detailed tax-reform program cannot be developed here. I can do no more than remark that any progressive movement without a coherent tax program will soon be a movement without a constituency. But it can be said that one aspect of Reaganomics, the tax-bracket indexation that Congress has attached to the individual income tax starting in 1984, may turn out to be a blessing in disguise. If the Canadian experience is any guide, tax-bracket indexation is a fiscal time bomb that may destroy the progressive income tax as the mainstay of government revenues; if it is passed, taxpayers will not countenance its repeal. But it is hardly in the interest of the majority of taxpayers to support the massive slashes in *corporate* taxation that the Administration pushed through Congress. The public is still buoyed by the President's rash promises that unleashing the corporate sector will end stagflation and bring renewed prosperity. It will not. The private sector is

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not going to behave any more responsibly now than it has in the past. American corporations will continue to export more jobs than they create, and they will continue to use their liquid funds to buy real estate, other companies or baseball teams. As Robert Kuttner, the editor of *Working Papers*, has written, "The dirty little secret of the Right is that the least efficient allocator of private capital has been private capital itself."

AN OPEN LETTER TO GORE VIDAL

This letter is in response to your anti-Jewish diatribe, published in THE NATION on 11/14/81.

A few years ago, you had the temerity to call William F. Buckley a "pro-crypto-nazi." Well, you have certainly out-nazied Buckley. Not only are you a Jew-hater, as Hitler was, but you have also adopted Goebbels' technique of the Big Lie.

For details, you, or anyone else, may send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Yours contemptuously,

Fred Cherry
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The Japanese have shown that a comparatively high level of corporate taxation is compatible with economic progress and the control of inflation—provided that these revenues are used to spur growth in selected areas of production. It is time for the left to start making the case for a new tax structure.

The pall that the "welfare mess" casts on American politics seems even harder to deal with than the tax structure. It is generally agreed that race (along with sexual equality, perhaps) is now the bedrock issue in America. Racial discrimination and institutionalized racism, and the spiral of antagonism they generate, cut so deeply into the body politic that it is reasonable to doubt that melioration is possible. Here too, though, necessity and opportunity coincide.

First, we must stop wringing our hands and saying that nothing can be done, for there is something very simple to be done (though admittedly it will not be easy to do it). The only policy that can prevent racial disintegration in America is a true full-employment policy. By this I do not mean "pilot programs," "experiments" or CETA-type programs, which mainly affect temporarily unemployed members of the middle class, but a truly comprehensive program (funded out of reductions in the military budget) that would provide socially useful and well-paying jobs in either the public or the private sector for all who need them. We will be amazed at how much crime, disruptive behavior in the public schools and vandalism of housing stock will decrease once the people who now find nothing constructive to do with their lives know that the economy reserves a dignified place for them. Furthermore, if the full-employment program includes a genuine commitment to decent child-care programs that parents want to use (rather than feel imprisoned by), we will be equally amazed at the reduction of the welfare rolls that will take place.

Finally, there is a simple task to be undertaken—a simple promise to be fulfilled—that will not require nearly so profound a wrench. There is one government program that can only be viewed positively, a program that is not means-tested, not subject to corruption and does not require an unwieldy bureaucracy to administer. I refer to universal national health insurance, accompanied by stringent rules for cost control. Even the most adamant "libertarians" are silent in the face of the remarkable popularity of "socialized medicine." There are many ways to implement that program, but the details are secondary as long as the principles of universality and cost control are faithfully carried out. If there is any place to begin redeeming government in the eyes of most Americans, this is certainly it.

None of these proposals are extraordinary or novel; they have merely been temporarily removed from political discourse in this country by a party of plutocracy that masquerades as a party of populism and is unchecked by any respectable opposition. An opposition whose leaders continue to evade the historical task of making the painful but necessary switch from guns to jobs and social security is an opposition that deserves the oblivion history will eventually grant it. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Evangelicals and Feminists

CAROL FLAKE

MARY KAY: The Success Story of America's Most Dynamic Businesswoman. *By Mary Kay Ash. Harper & Row. 206 pp. $10.95.*

I'M NOT A WOMEN'S LIBBER, BUT . . . *By Anne Bowen Follis. Abingdon. 128 pp. $7.95.*

FROM HOUSEWIFE TO HERETIC. *By Sonia Johnson. Doubleday and Company. 406 pp. $14.95.*

> *Now I wouldn't presume to tell a woman*
> *what a woman ought to think—*
> *But tell her if she's gotta think,*
> *THINK PINK!*
>
> —*from* Funny Face

Evangelicalism has given feminists their strongest foes and their strangest allies. At one extreme we find Marabel Morgan's total (evangelical) women, locked into suburbia but liberated in bed, kneeling in filmy negligees at the patriarchal altar. And at the other, Mary Kay Ash's cosmetics saleswomen, newly liberated from their kitchens, are burning up the road in pink Cadillacs and preaching the gospel of success.

Both Mary Kay Ash and Marabel Morgan believe in God, family and mascara, but for Mary Kay, those allegiances are not incompatible with a career. Morgan advises her women to wheedle their perks from the master of the household; Mary Kay sets a restless housewife up with a cosmetics case, a car and a credo for achievement. Although few feminists would be comfortable with the implications of pink Cadillacs, Mary Kay, for all her gewgaws and furs, is a de facto feminist. The product she's promoting is glamour, but the diamond bumblebees she awards her top saleswomen are badges of honor, and the Ultrasuede suits that her sales directors wear are the field uniforms of combat veterans. Mary Kay's "pink power" is the contemporary equivalent of what Harriet Beecher Stowe called "the Pink and White Tyranny"—the urge of frustrated middle-class women to use their femininity as a means to power. A career with Mary Kay cosmetics may not entirely free a woman from the doll's house, but it will enable her to pay off the mortgage and put the title in her own name.

Mary Kay, in her recent autobiography, *Mary Kay: The Success Story of America's Most Dynamic Businesswoman*, uses her life as a paradigm of positive thinking. Unlike Phyllis Schlafly, who regards her own career as nonpareil, Mary Kay expects other women to follow her example. Raised by a hard-working mother who supported four kids and an invalid husband, little Mary Kay was no powder puff. She grew up plump but competitive in Houston. Years later, after she and her own brood were abandoned by her husband, Mary Kay learned how to sell the hard way. Eventually she earned the title "Queen of Sales" for Stanley Home Products, and went on to become national training director for the World Gift Company.

Only months after she left this choice position, Mary Kay began to design her own dream company—a company, fueled by both the vanity and the initiative of women, that would apply the Tupperware-party approach to selling makeup. In 1963, already a grandmother, Mary Kay founded a cosmetics company that would achieve annual retail sales of $100 million by 1980. Along the way she instituted flex-time policies for working mothers and held seminars for disgruntled husbands to teach them how to be cheerleaders for their wives' careers.

And how did God figure in all of this? Mary Kay says, "I believe God has helped us, because it seems as though everything we attempt just works out." For instance, there were rumors about the dangers of hexachlorophene, an ingredient of Mary Kay body lotion. "Well," she says, "we decided to remove it, and a very short time after that, the Food and Drug Administration came out and declared that hexachlorophene could not be used." An example of divine providence, evidently. In any case, America's "most dynamic businesswoman" has had it all, and in pink: faith, family and fortune.

For other spirited evangelical women, the road to fulfillment may be a bit more circuitous. For one thing, St. Paul stands in their way. In his stern letters to the unruly Corinthians, Paul laid the groundwork for two millenniums of misogyny in Christian dogma: "Let women be silent in church, for it is not permitted for them to speak; but let them be subordinate, just as the law says. If they wish to learn anything, let them inquire at home from their husbands." Evangelical feminists have dealt with the chauvinism of Paul's "domestic code" in three ways: they have written it off as a prejudice of the times; they have pointed to other scriptures in which Paul talked about being one with Christ ("there is not any Jew nor Greek, not any slave nor free, not any male and female; for ye are all one with Christ"), or they have posed the concept of "mutual submission" of husband and wife. Although none of these positions offer a clear political stance on such issues as the Equal Rights Amendment, many evangelical women refer to themselves as "biblical feminists."

But the entrenched patriarchy of the church is not the only doctrinal obstacle to evangelical feminists; they must also confront the skepticism of secular feminists. In *I'm Not a Women's Libber. But . . .*, late-bloomer Anne Bowen Follis, wife of a Methodist minister, describes the initial hostility she encountered during her campaign for the E.R.A. from feminists who scorned both her religious commitment and her status as a housewife.

Follis was concerned with finding a common ground between her faith in feminism and her allegiance to God and the family: "How does one strike a chord somewhere in the middle; between strong convictions and intolerance; between the Christians who claim God is an anti-feminist and the feminists who insist Christianity is anti-woman?" Unfortunately her book, a thoughtful but unremarkable testimonial to Betty Friedan's second-stage variety of feminism, begs too many questions to become a substantive addition to the literature of evangelical feminism (see *All We're Meant to Be: A*

Carol Flake, arts editor of The Boston Phoenix, *is at work on a book about evangelicalism.*

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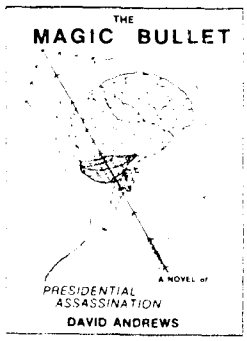

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Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation).

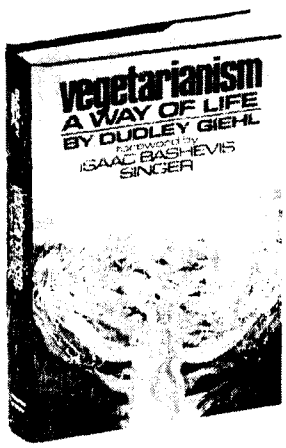
Because her husband and the other members of her church continued to support her, Follis was never really turned out into the wilderness, as was Mormon excommunicant Sonia Johnson, whose work for the E.R.A. ultimately left her bereft of both church and husband. As Jennie Anderson Froiseth wrote in *The Women of Mormonism* (1882):

> We can scarcely give too high a tribute to the courage of the apostate Mormon women. It may be thought a very easy matter to leave the church; but when it is remembered that leaving the church meant the entire breaking away from all old friendships, complete ostracism from all old associations, and perhaps starvation for their children, it will be seen that it required more moral strength than is possessed by every woman to cross the line that proclaimed her an outcast.

Johnson's feminist awakening was more dramatic than most because it took place within the context of a church whose leaders, during the days of polygamy, referred to women as "cows." Her remarkable story seems altogether different from the suburban exoduses and consciousness-raising routines of feminism a decade ago. Johnson tells of fasting and praying and seeing encouraging apparitions of great women. With her visions, her meeting-house showdowns and her scripture-quoting duels, Johnson's rebellion against the elders of the Mormon Church resembles Anne Hutchinson's last stand against the elders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Had Johnson's rebellion occurred a century earlier, she might have joined Hutchinson as a martyr of American feminism, since the Mormons often inflicted Old Testament punishments upon their outcasts, when they did not simply leave them to the tender mercies of the Indians.

In modern times, however, such dramas are played out before TV cameras. Apparently Johnson's unpardonable sin against the Mormon Church was to bring notoriety to both its furtive politics (an inordinate number of Mormons work for the Central Intelligence Agency) as well as its patriarchal prejudices. *From Housewife to Heretic* is a detailed account of an ordinary woman who made a few speeches in favor of the E.R.A. and found herself the darling of the media and the bête noire of her church. Cast out from the community of the church into the illusory glow of celebrityhood, Johnson experienced uncertainty at first and then almost fanatical resolve. Toward the end of her account here, events begin to take on the cruel coincidences of melodrama. Even as her inquisitors were knocking at Johnson's door to lead her to trial, her husband was packing his bags to leave her for a younger woman. Set within this long saga of a modern-day inquisition is the sad narrative of a disintegrating marriage.

Little wonder that Johnson's recollections are sharpened by a bittersweet righteousness. Nearly everything in her past seems to foreshadow that time when her husband would walk out and the letter of excommunication would arrive at her doorstep. Yet one can't help but ask why she worked so hard at a marriage and a church membership that offered such diminishing returns. In anticipation of such a question, Johnson quotes former Mormon James Chapman on the subject of dissent: "Mormonism to real Mormons is not just another church, another voluntary



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organization . . . it is the Kingdom of God. . . . To tell a Mormon dissident to love the church as it is or leave it is like saying that if you disagree with the way the world is today, you should commit suicide." For some devout Christians, it seems, working for change in the city of man can jeopardize one's citizenship in the City of God. The wonder is that Johnson can retain her belief in the City of God even after its representatives who dwell in the city of man have cast her outside its gates. □

Biological Passion Play

MARY KINZIE

WHAT MANNER OF BEAST. *By Donald Finkel. Atheneum Publishers. 62 pp. $12.95. Paper $7.95.*

Bruno Bettelheim tells a haunting anecdote about an autistic child so repelled by people that she was difficult not only to reach on a human level but even to feed. He describes how she "prowled" at night, approachable only by her favorite counselor, who "roamed through the building with her for many hours each night, feeding her as they went" (*The Empty Fortress*). This is the kind of night ramble that would appeal to the poet Donald Finkel; it is a scene of dull terror on the part of the afflicted child, of an almost impersonal charity on the part of the counselor and, on the simplest level, of enormous tactical and rhythmic aggravations as the one tries to feed the other.

Bettelheim uses this anecdote to suggest how easy it is to misconstrue wild autism as literal ferality, hence how difficult it is to disprove myths about so-called "wolf children." But for the bard and the storyteller—for a writer like Finkel—what would be fascinating is the reality of those nights: the hours of wearisome pacing through the halls and the common rooms of the clinic; the counselor's efforts to continue speaking in a direct and affectionate way despite the little girl's recoil from contact, her self-absorption, her nudity, her matted hair, her smell, her bared teeth . . . and there is something else. I suspect that most artists would be appalled—and obsessed—by an idea hardly hinted at by Bettelheim: the idea that the distance between watcher and watched is the work of an instant to bridge. Most artists would, I think, view these two characters as parts of the same self.

Of course, this esthetic identification is not one that will help cure the autistic, nor will it necessarily reduce the amount of evil in the world by increasing the amount of sympathy. It is not even a literal assumption about the ego. It is an instantaneous and, if you will, archetypal "leap" by which the artist might seek to hold in one instant—in one figure—the disparate and eccentric antagonisms of our nature.

Finkel's most compelling metaphors for the conflicts between one state of being and another involve the idea of suspension in different mediums. An Indian encountered on Martin Frobisher's first Arctic voyage in 1576 is said to approach objects with a fanciful awe; he strokes, raps and rubs the furniture instead of sitting down on it. In the Indian's iconic medium, spectacles are "wafers of moon/frozen so fast they will not come/unfrozen, even on his tongue." Despite the lyricism and the restraint of these descriptions, Finkel is portraying a strangeness that is both disturbing and aggressive; something in our modesty is subtly outraged when the Indian "touches his tongue to the lens of the Master's glass."

What Manner of Beast is a suite of poems about the fearful ease of permeating the boundary between the human realm and the merely animal. It has a dual subject: the "humanity" (that is, the shared intelligence, the need for affection and the ability to "play") of primitives and lesser animals, and the "animality" (the shared bewilderment, the darkness, the resort to instinct) of modern men and women. Owing to the correspondence between these two realms, every cruel act by a beast (for example, rival apes tearing each other's infants to bits) is matched with equally gratuitous acts committed by men (by tribesmen in Zaire, by supposedly friendly Chipewyans in Canada). Finkel

Mary Kinzie's first book of poetry, The Threshold of the Year, *will be published by the University of Missouri Press in February. She teaches at Northwestern University.*

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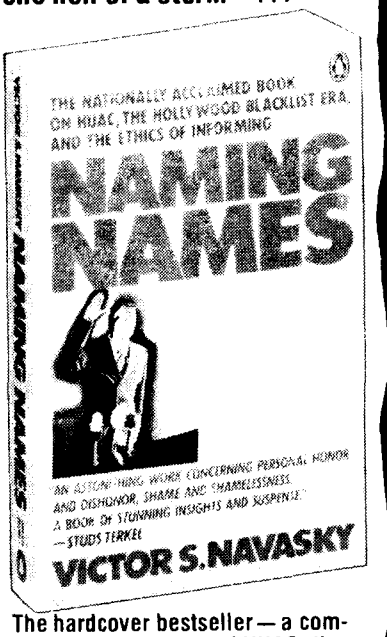
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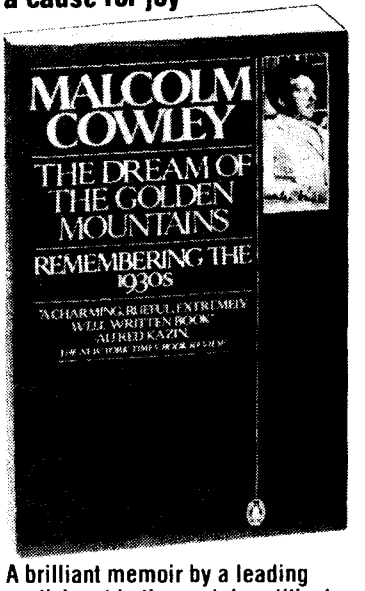

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then takes the analogy further so that, for every dark intention within primitive men alluded to in his sources, he excerpts yet more chilling and indefensible motives on the part of men presumed civilized (the voyages of Frobisher and Richard Hakluyt abound in examples). Finally, lest sixteenth-century "civilization" seem a bit rough and ready, Finkel in other poems gives us contemporary examples, bringing in a horde of scientists and technicians as evidence of the limited sympathy evinced by "advanced" investigators of non-human behavior.

Many of these behavioral biologists are trying to teach primates to master sign languages, to deal in abstractions, to postpone gratification and to adopt symbolic tokens (hence, to use money), but these are lessons inculcated at great cost. Other animals are used as bribes, withheld if the subject animals fail to pay attention or learn quickly enough. All the animals are caged. All are sexually deprived. All are constantly watched. And in Finkel's laboratory the chimpanzee Lana must face an authority figure more powerful and more vulgar than Arthur Koestler's commissar:

between the hunger and the monkey chow
lies the machine
between the boredom and the colored slides
the machine, which once
toward morning, she entreated
Please tickle Lana
("The Beast in the Machine")

The machine is indeed a cruel tutor, the more so when it can subdue its own inventors, like Finkel's persona, the graduate student "Roger," whom the learning machine has also trapped: "My clipboard calls like a siren." Roger and the chimpanzee Lucy are like lovers lost in a forest of word-match tab and wingèd clockface:

hurry, she signs to me
fluttering those ecstatic hands
while from under the clip the seconds
trickle from my side like rills of blood
("Chase Lucy")

at my back, the kettle's keening litanie
the seconds scuttle through my Timex crystal
like fugitives, while under my pen
the word-list whispers, *listen listen*
("That Listen")

Finkel's poetic method has been likened to collage—the interleaving of found, quoted and overheard material with his own dramatic, unpunctuated free verse, in which the space at the end of the line often does double duty: it sometimes implies a period and other times a running-on to the next line. The poet also uses multiple voices distinguished by italics and indentation, as in the eerie "gospels" of the Emperor penguins in his superb *Adequate Earth* (1972) or in the songs of the captured Eskimos in the present volume. Finkel is uncannily deft at finding eloquent and credible language for the speechless and the alien—again, by virtue of extraordinary leaps of insight.

The more daring of these intuitive leaps occur in the erotic poems. I should caution readers that Finkel comes from the same school of hysterical sexual description as do the prose writers Robert Coover, Stanley Elkin and Philip Roth. From Finkel's earlier books: "My groin clangs like a shovel on a stone"; "screwing dizzily/into her unctuous socket"; the poet searches for "a climax lasting days"; "I flowed/down her shadowy snatch." Five of Finkel's nine volumes have been marred by this sort of strip-joint surrealism. But since *The Garbage Wars* in 1970, Finkel has chosen to incorporate his peculiar blend of ego and prophecy in less self-flattering ways. Thus when he describes the ingenious wooing of the dolphin Peter and the shadowy arousal of the woman (Margaret Howe) who has been trying to teach the animal to say her name, Finkel is commenting on the ludicrous aspects of the relationship without relinquishing the poignant ones. The poem is called "MMMMMM":

her ankles sting from the nicks of his teeth
. . .
playing, he lets his favorite ball
roll back in his mouth, parting his teeth
in a permanent smile, as if to say
Come I won't hurt you

I stand very still, legs slightly apart, and Peter slides his mouth gently over my shin. His mouth opens all the way and he begins up and down my leg. Then the other leg.

The Right has gained much of its popular credibility by portraying itself as the champion of Family life. 1982 will see further gains by the Right unless this mass imagery is challenged. Yet real support for American families comes not from a competitive ethics of the marketplace, but from programs for child care, health care, employment, adequate housing, reproductive rights, a less stressful work environment, and the building of community networks for family support. The Right can be stopped in 1982, but only if liberals and progressives, the unions and the women's movement and civil rights groups and the religious community are understood to be the real Pro-Family force.

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a month of this salty courtship
till one evening, in the second moon
of their togethering, he lets the ball
slip from his mouth entirely
and, rolling on his side
approaches

MARGARET: *MMMMMM*
MMAGRIT Yes!
Yes! (clapping)
That's
PETER: *(softly) Mxx xxx*
MARGARET: *an EM. Let's do it*
again. Say . . .
MMAGRIT
PETER: *mxxxxxxxxx*

Margaret's rhetoric is both banal and pornographic ("I am completely vulnerable to him"), and of course Finkel's stage-whisper primitivism is grating ("second moon," "togethering"), but like all the romances in *What Manner of Beast*, the urgent meetings between Peter and Margaret are hopelessly false; lacking any proper language, they must fall back on laboratory cliché—while, even as cliché is reinvoked, the poem registers the shudder of threatened taboo.

Even when his subject is the baffled puberty of the wild child found in France in the late eighteenth century, Finkel shows by his subtle stylistic parody that not even the cult of sensibility can mask the housekeeper's dullness of vision or the doctor's hardness of heart. Madame Guerin is indirectly explaining why, early each Sunday morning, Victor can be heard calling out "*lli lli lli*"; the doctor's analysis appears in italics:

how many Sundays was it, Julie
had joined them for dinner? her faultless Julie
of the downcast eyes, the forthright breasts
that could impale a saint, provoke
not a sound, but a psalm of longing
a song such as infant Solomon
might croon in his cradle, *Julie Julie*

I have seen him in a company of women attempting to relieve his uneasiness by sitting beside one of them and gently taking hold of her hand, her arms and her knees

When he died at 43, Victor was celibate. Madame Guerin had remained with him, powerless to help let alone understand him, but nevertheless stricken by his loneliness. The poem ends with her silent keening (as Victor had cried aloud for *lli lli lli*), the cry "like a fishbone caught in her throat/*Victor Victor Victor Victor.*"

Like many of the transfers of sympathy in Finkel's new book, Madame Guerin's mourning is both involuntary and enormously affecting. Although none of the characters in the book's loosely constructed biological passion play are particularly heroic or majestic, the poet makes the agon in which they are engaged seem momentous. In one of the many slighter poems that float about the larger ones like small pilot fish, Donald Finkel speaks through a young tuna fisherman who had only one way to free the dolphin he had caught by accident:

the wicked moonlight
winks at the tip of my grappling hook -
as I plunge it into the frantic fabric
it's only the work of an instant
to free her

and lightyears before
I lose sight of her
sinking among gull-scraps
wearing the old imperturbable smile
unresisting, a goddess of garbage
the word made meat

The dead mammal with the mermaid smile sinks into the slough of memory, the endless casualty of another night ramble with cool imperturbable art. □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You
The Actor's Nightmare

Some years ago, his reputation as an *enfant terrible* preceding him, Christopher Durang came down from Harvard to the Yale School of Drama. There, among other accomplishments, he collaborated with Albert Innaurato (who would later become the author of *Gemini* and other Broadway successes) on a grand spoof called *The Idiots Karamazov*, a production notable in its own right as well as for starring Meryl Streep, in a wheelchair, as Constance Garnett. Although *The Idiots K* wasn't especially marked by antireligious sentiment, Innaurato shares Durang's fierce hatred of the Roman Catholic Church they were both born into, a loathing which shows itself much more virulently in Durang's work.

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Durang doesn't write exclusively or even most of the time about, or rather against, Catholicism, yet one feels his revulsion toward it seeping into nearly everything he does. This is a pity, for Durang has considerable gifts, mostly of a satiric kind, but they are besieged by his obsession. Though obsessions can sustain a writer, they can also limit him, since they have a way of infringing on a writer's sense of justice and his capacity to make distinctions.

Durang's newest play, a short but complete work called *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*, is having a reprise at the Playwrights Horizons after having been produced last year at the Ensemble Studio Theater, where it won an Obie. The extraordinary vehemence of the play's anti-Catholicism amply demonstrates that we can publicly say, if not necessarily do, nearly anything we want to in this country. Most of the reviews have noted the vehemence, but almost all have accepted it in the interest of praising Durang's comic talents. Those talents are on display, it should be said, but so excessive is Durang's spleen, and so lacking is he in taste (not "good" taste, which would be priggish to ask for, but taste of any kind), that the laughs come reluctantly, with embarrassment and even guilt. At least this is so for the more reflective members of the audience; the others yock in predictable fashion.

Sister Mary Ignatius begins with a nun giving a lecture on basic Catholic doctrine. (Hell, she tells us, is awful, while purgatory is "fairly unpleasant.") A small boy comes on and is grilled on his catechism; he replies with mechanical assurance and is rewarded with cookies from a seemingly endless supply in the pockets of the nun's habit. Next she answers questions that have been written on cards, presumably by members of the audience. To one of these—"If God is all-powerful, why does he allow evil in the world?"—her response is to stare straight ahead, then to flip the card over and proceed to the next question. So far things are amusing enough; the mockery is of a kind that any secularist might engage in, touching as it does on the real vulnerabilities of the church in the modern world.

But it all turns increasingly nasty. Four of the nun's former pupils enter and begin to enact a Christmas pageant such as they say they used to do in school (a particularly unpleasant bit is the nailing to a little cross of a doll representing Christ). When the nun interrogates them on their present lives, they recount tales of abortion, homosexuality and extramarital sex. The nun then flies into a rage and tells them they're all going straight to hell ("You do that thing that makes Jesus puke," she says to the homosexual). At this point, one of the women pulls out a pistol and, after telling Sister Mary that "you shouldn't be allowed to teach children," gets ready to shoot her.

Through a ruse, the nun grabs hold of the gun and shoots the woman. During her ensuing lecture at gunpoint to the others on the subject of willpower, she grows steadily more demented, and the play slips precipitously out of control. The satire, which has been shaky all along, now totally loses credibility; a viciousness pervades that grinds up wit, social observation and moral criticism, leaving only an *idée fixe* or, if the term be permitted, an *haine fixe*—an immovable and unappeasable hatred. Peter Viereck once wrote that "anti-Catholicism is the anti-Semitism of the liberal." The fact that Durang is or was himself a Catholic may not be known to the audience, but what is apparent, to the viewers' discomfort, is the truth of Viereck's observation.

Sister Mary Ignatius is accompanied by a brief curtain-raiser called *The Actor's Nightmare*, a mild piece of satire taking off on Shakespeare, Noel Coward and Samuel Beckett, and only a tiny bit on Catholicism. □

HEMISPHERES

Our bodies, luminary under bedclothes,
fit tightly like the pieces of a broken
terra cotta vase that is newly mended,
smooth surfaces, no jagged edges visible.

I've heard that countries were so interlocked
before the oceans fractured them and splayed
Mexico enfolding Mauritania;
Brazil's round shoulder hoisted to Nigeria;
Italy pressing Libya; Alaska
so linked with Russia in the Bering Straits
that fingers touched, like dead hands on a harp.
Our tremulous hands held fast in sleep at dawn;
legs, arms entwined, one continent, one mass.

Grace Schulman

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Ragtime

E. L. Doctorow's fat and flamboyant novel *Ragtime* is a set of overlapping and entwined scenarios, a series of *tableaux vivants* which highlight a rich segment of American history. One could carve from it any number of movies, from a psychological biography of Harry Houdini, to the domestic amours of Harry K. Thaw, to a winter with Admiral Peary at the North Pole.

Milos Forman, with his screen writer, Michael Weller, has operated on the book to expose what is no doubt its central cord—the short, stirring and tragic life of Coalhouse Walker Jr., a black man who demanded justice half a century too soon. Doctorow's readers will recognize other strands of his chronicle, but they have all been subordinated to the main theme in varying degrees; some have been dropped entirely. Walker's effect on the lives of Father, Mother and Younger Brother is portrayed at length, though more superficially than in the novel, but Houdini is a mere newsreel curiosity; Emma Goldman is banished, along with J.P. Morgan and Henry Ford; Tateh's lyric trolley-car journey from Mulberry Street to New England with his little daughter is dispensed with, though the ghetto silhouette-artist does reappear as the resplendent Baron Ashkenazy, filming an early serial on the beach at Atlantic City.

What remains is a well-constructed, coherent, eventful period drama that embraces a social theme more serious than such entertainments usually attempt. The film is much more sober than the novel; the wild, ingenious coin-

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cidence that was the latter's wit has been disciplined to plausibility. The matter-of-fact intercourse between actual and invented persons that gave the book its seductively dreamlike quality is less felt on the screen, where all the characters are bathed in the same amber light of high theatricality. But though much is lost, some visual pleasures are gained. Doctorow tells us how Thaw stalked across the crowded floor of Madison Square Garden's rooftop theater to empty his gun into the head of Stanford White; it is a vivid passage. But Forman, tossing money about like Croesus himself, builds a facsimile of the place, stages a big Floradora spectacle from *Mamzelle Champagne* and shows us the frightened Evelyn Nesbit, watching as her whey-faced lunatic of a husband forges his way through the babble of New York City's dining and drinking high society toward the table of the unsuspecting White (played, by the way, with lusty arrogance by Norman Mailer). The opulence of the scene and its evocative power are stunning. Similarly, when the racist hoodlums of the White Plains volunteer fire department desecrate Walker's car, thus starting the clock of his rage, the episode carries an extra shock because we have been feasting our eyes on the brass-trimmed elegance of the proud black's antique Ford. So, though the film has less depth than the book, and though Forman avoids some of the bolder leaps in Doctorow's choreography of history, it drives through a nostalgic panorama of the ragtime era to its bitter, foregone conclusion.

The cast, which fairly gleams with larger-than-life vitality under Forman's direction, is far too large for individual mention. Here are a few of the players whose performances struck me most forcefully. Robert Joy, the Canadian actor who made his screen debut as the dope pusher in *Atlantic City* and who is the most implacable of the zealots in *Ticket to Heaven*, plays the insanely jealous, perhaps totally insane, Harry K. Thaw. Elizabeth McGovern's portrayal of Evelyn Nesbit is more Anita Loos than E.L. Doctorow, but she carries off her big scene, in which she springs stark naked from the arms of Younger Brother (Brad Dourif) to bargain with the lawyers employed by Thaw's mother, with a hilarious poise remarkable in a 19-year-old actress. Mandy Patinkin is a Tateh straight out of Chagall and a Baron Ashkenazy just in from Ruritania. Kenneth McMillan is by turns loathsome, pathetic and clownish as Willie Conklin, fire chief, neighborhood bully and nigger hater.

Then there is Howard E. Rollins, an actor with considerable TV experience here appearing in his first movie as Coalhouse Walker Jr., the ragtime pianist, wayward father and Harlem dude who proves himself ready to kill and be killed in an attempt to prove that a black man is an American citizen and entitled to the rights of that estate. Rollins revels in *Ragtime*'s theatricality. He is patiently tender with Sarah (Debbie Allen), his ill-used sweetheart; forbearingly polite in the presence of Father's well-intentioned racism; icily dignified when goaded by the beer-bellied firemen; sadly deferential toward Booker T. Washington (Moses Gunn); quietly lethal as the leader of the outlaw band. He strikes sparks whenever he appears and is the unmistakable star of *Ragtime*.

And here arises an unintended bit of irony, for Rollins is not billed as the star. That honor falls on James Cagney, who has emerged from twenty years of retirement to play Rheinlander Waldo, Police Commissioner of New York City. It is fine to have Cagney back on the screen, and great to discover that he has lost none of his Irish bravado. But his part, though rich, is brief, and the center of tension remains with Rollins even while Cagney is cutting capers in the police stakeout across the street from the gang's last stand in the Pierpont Morgan Library.

I recognize that billing Cagney above Rollins, and shining the publicity on the old white man instead of the young black man, is not bigotry but show business. Cagney is a folk hero of the movies whom the public will flock to see in what may well be his last appearance. Rollins is relatively unknown; the role of Walker is a big step up for him, and there will be plenty of time to give him his due. However, the central point of *Ragtime*, made more strongly on the screen than in the book, is that in those bully Teddy Roosevelt days, a black man had to die to have his rights acknowledged, and even then was cheated of them. The implication is that in this respect, at least, we are better than our grandfathers, and no doubt that is so. But some latter-day brothers and sisters of Coalhouse Walker's may be wryly amused by the box office calculations of Paramount Pictures. □

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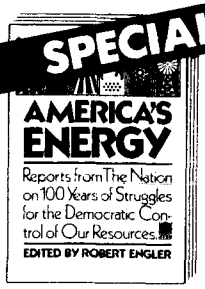
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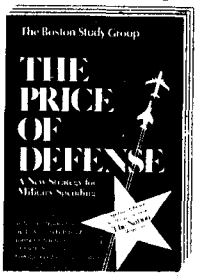

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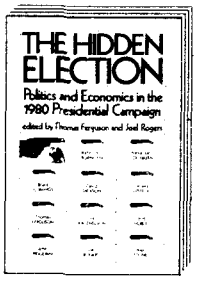

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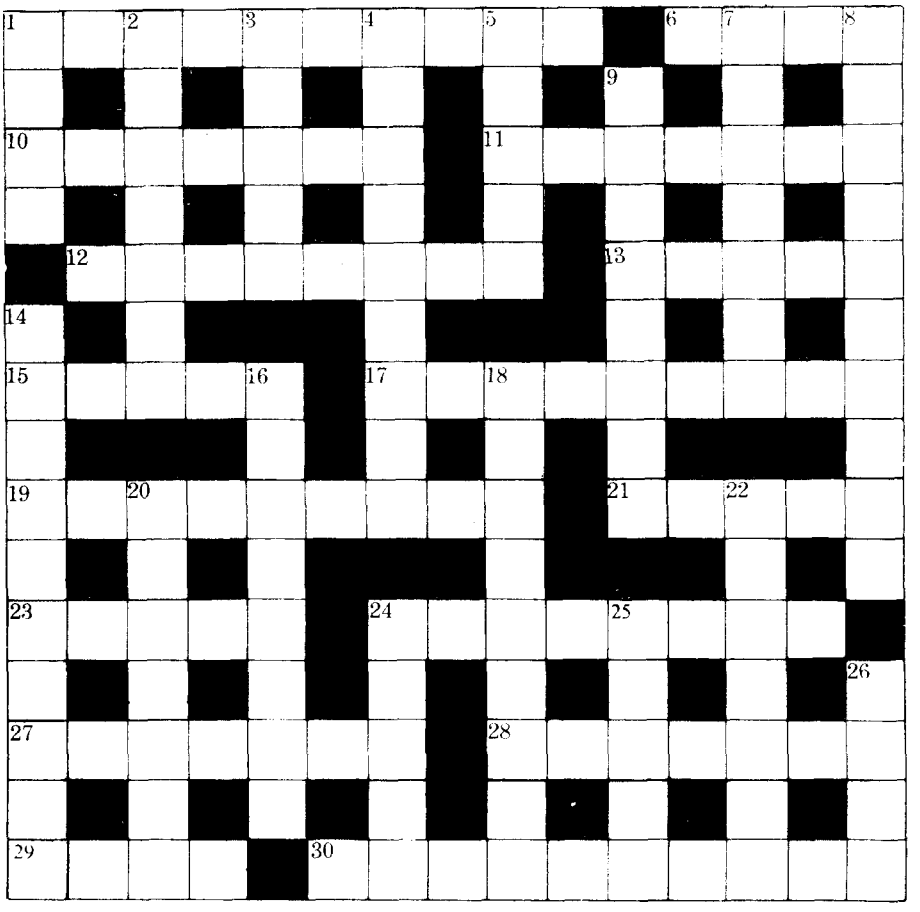

ACROSS

1 A car lift made of wood doesn't seem very practical for such a feller! (10)
6 Such times one would make a pavement with 26. (4)
10 Sounds chivalrous, but that's how some performances go on! (7)
11 Might be attached to a bow for tying up an artist, as well. (7)
12 Begs to differ with a set rent. (8)
13 Might one dine off this, in Asia. (5)
15 They are rather 16, also confused with 5. (5)
17 Trifles associated with something French. (Protest the playwright's product?) (9)
19 From one direction, only the RR comes out. (9)
21 Pretend what is foreign has no alternative? (5)
23 You couldn't say "nothing could be finer"—since you so draw a conclusion. (5)
24 They might be on the train, but one hears it's a way to make soldiers talk. (8)
27 A sign of victory at last! (Sellers might be.) (7)
28 Tearing in pieces one who doesn't give thanks? (7)
29 Measures weapons, in common parlance. (4)
30 Western suns, at times? The true breed might be found here. (3,7)

DOWN

1 and 14 What one commonly puts on in winter with a liver disorder seems to be in character. (4,4,6)
2 The color of the so-called spy when, as some might say, mother is around? (7)
3 Come in with 12, possibly, having sat out. (5)
4 One isn't so likely to have a safe crossing. (9)
5 Informally gets by with vestments. (5)
7 When it's near, it isn't exactly what the Greeks drink. (7)
8 Exceptional, though what is big in California may be just getting by. (10)
9 and 25 One could make the GI out of them—though 1 and 14 looked to find such. (6,2,5)
14 See 1 down
16 Is what one finds in a WASP hero ideally far from square? (8)
18 Made bare (*sic*) by those who complain of it? (9)
20 Oil may be, as offenders are made to pay twice, which is good enough in radical surroundings. (7)
22 Is the writer a teacher, to show it? Say again? (7)
24 Under the railroad car, it sounds like something to be afraid of. (5)
25 See 9
26 Hardy favorite, perhaps, though only found in broken sets. (4)

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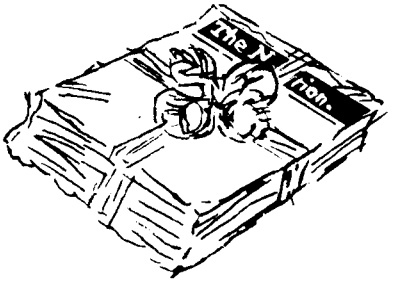

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